

FABLES &  
HUMOUR



# KING KUSHA

A JATAKA STORY ABOUT INNER BEAUTY

Vol 664 | ₹50



## KING KUSHA

Kusha, prince of Kushavati was blessed with immense wisdom and extraordinary talent but he had the ugliest of faces. The beautiful princess Prabhavati was not aware of his ugliness when she married him. Kusha's mother saw to it that the princess never set eyes on her son's face. But when she did, Prabhavati refused to have anything to do with her husband and went away leaving poor Kusha broken-hearted.

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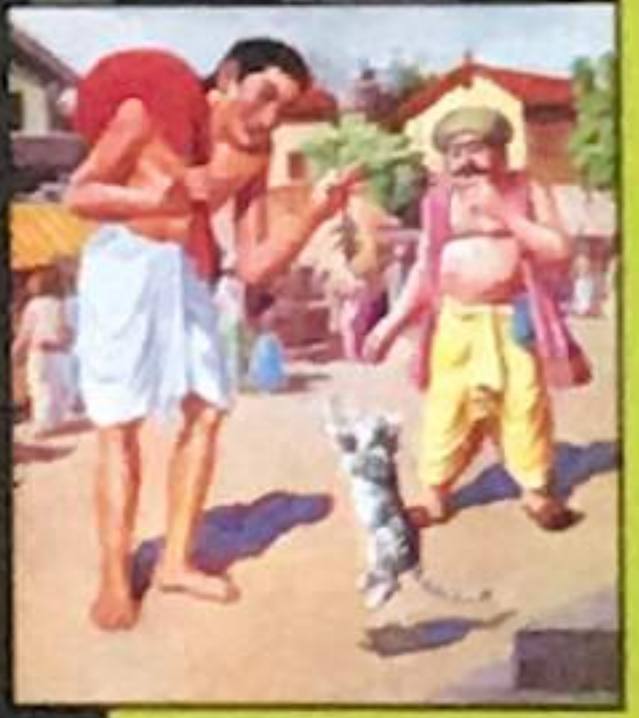
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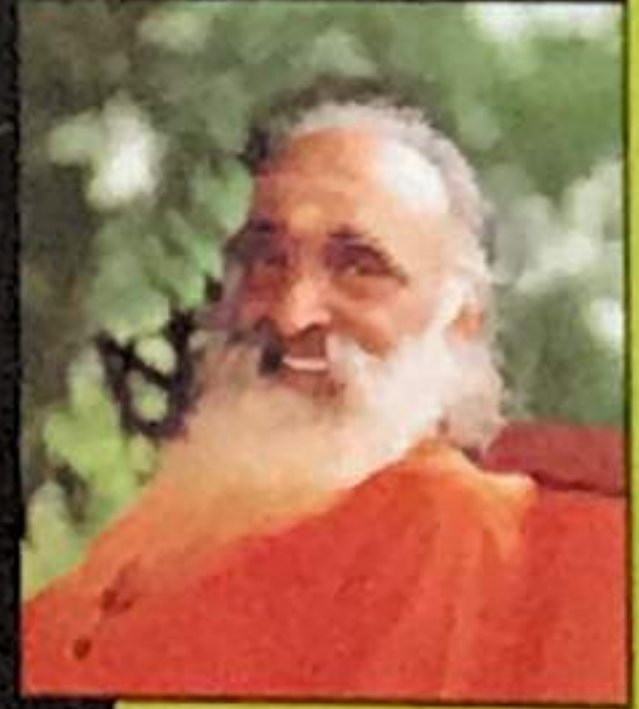
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# KING KUSHA



SHEELAVATI, THE CHIEF QUEEN OF THE HEIRLESS KING OKKAKA OF KUSHAVATI, WAS OFFERED A BOON BY INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.



YOU SHALL HAVE TWO SONS. ONE WISE BUT UGLY, THE OTHER HANDSOME BUT A FOOL. WHICH WILL YOU HAVE FIRST?

THE WISE ONE, MY LORD.

IN DUE COURSE, SHEELAVATI GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.

HE SHALL BE CALLED KUSHA.





TWO YEARS LATER, SHE GAVE BIRTH TO THE SECOND SON — JAYAMPATI.



WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BABY!

EVEN AS A CHILD, KUSHA WAS CONSCIOUS OF HIS APPEARANCE.



I MUST EXCEL IN ALL THE ARTS TO MAKE UP FOR MY UGLY LOOKS.

IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, KUSHA MASTERED THE ARTS OF MUSIC, PAINTING AND SCULPTURE. ONE DAY—

SHEELAVATI, KUSHA IS ALMOST SIXTEEN YEARS OLD. I WOULD LIKE TO PLACE HIM ON THE THRONE WHILE I AM YET ALIVE. BUT BEFORE I DO, I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM MARRIED.



I TOO WOULD LOVE TO HAVE A DAUGHTER IN THE PALACE!

WHEN KUSHA LEARNT OF HIS PARENTS' WISHES HE WAS SAD.



WOULD ANY PRINCESS MARRY AN UGLY FELLOW LIKE ME?

AFTER GIVING THE MATTER A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT, HE HIT UPON A PLAN.



I WILL CREATE A BEAUTIFUL IMAGE AND ASK FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE—SOMEONE EXACTLY LIKE IT FOR A WIFE.



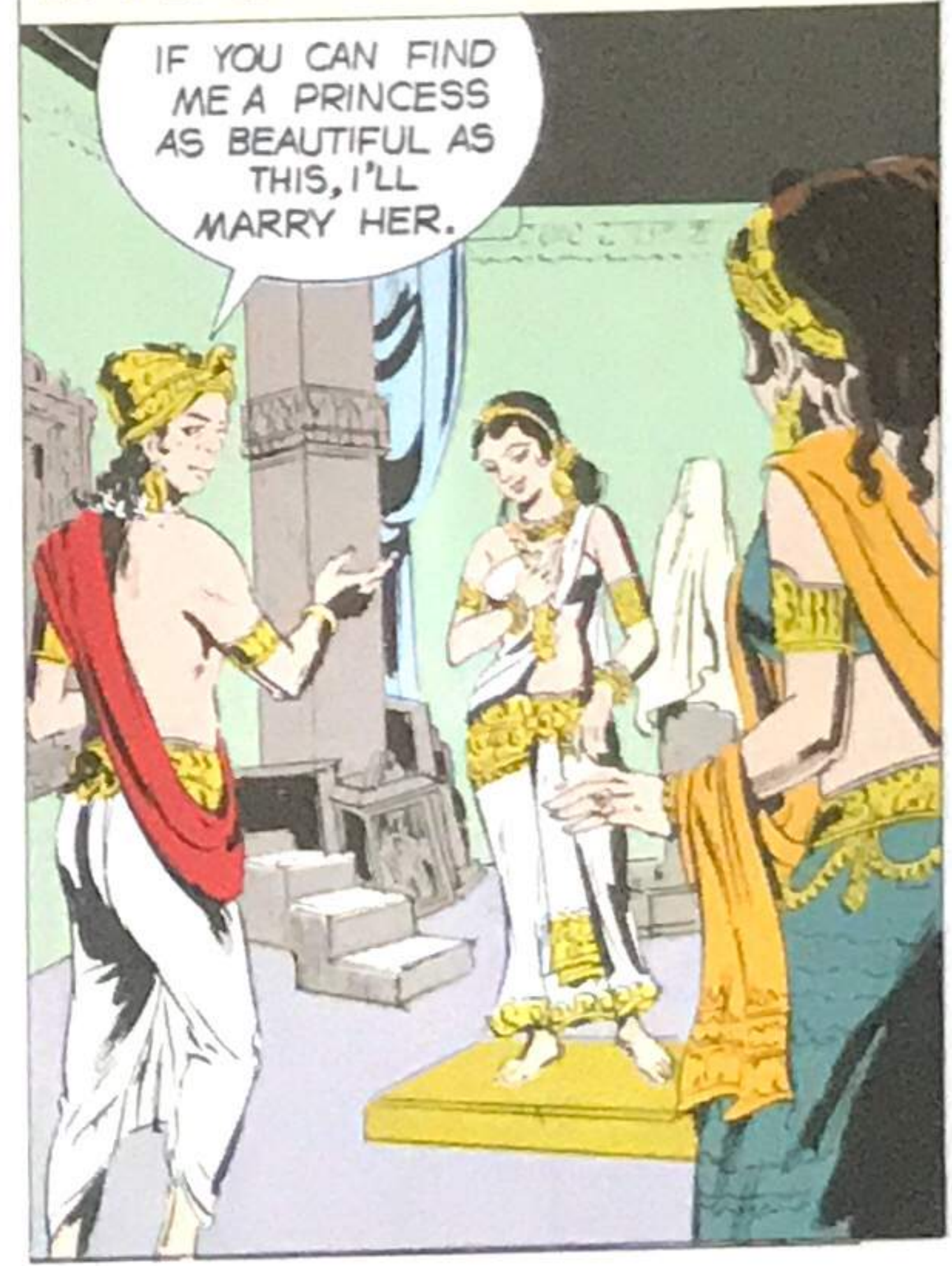
BUT I CANNOT TELL MY PARENTS THIS. IT WOULD HURT THEM. I MUST FIND A WAY OUT.

WHEN THE IMAGE WAS COMPLETED, KUSHA COULD NOT HELP ADMIRING HIS OWN WORK.



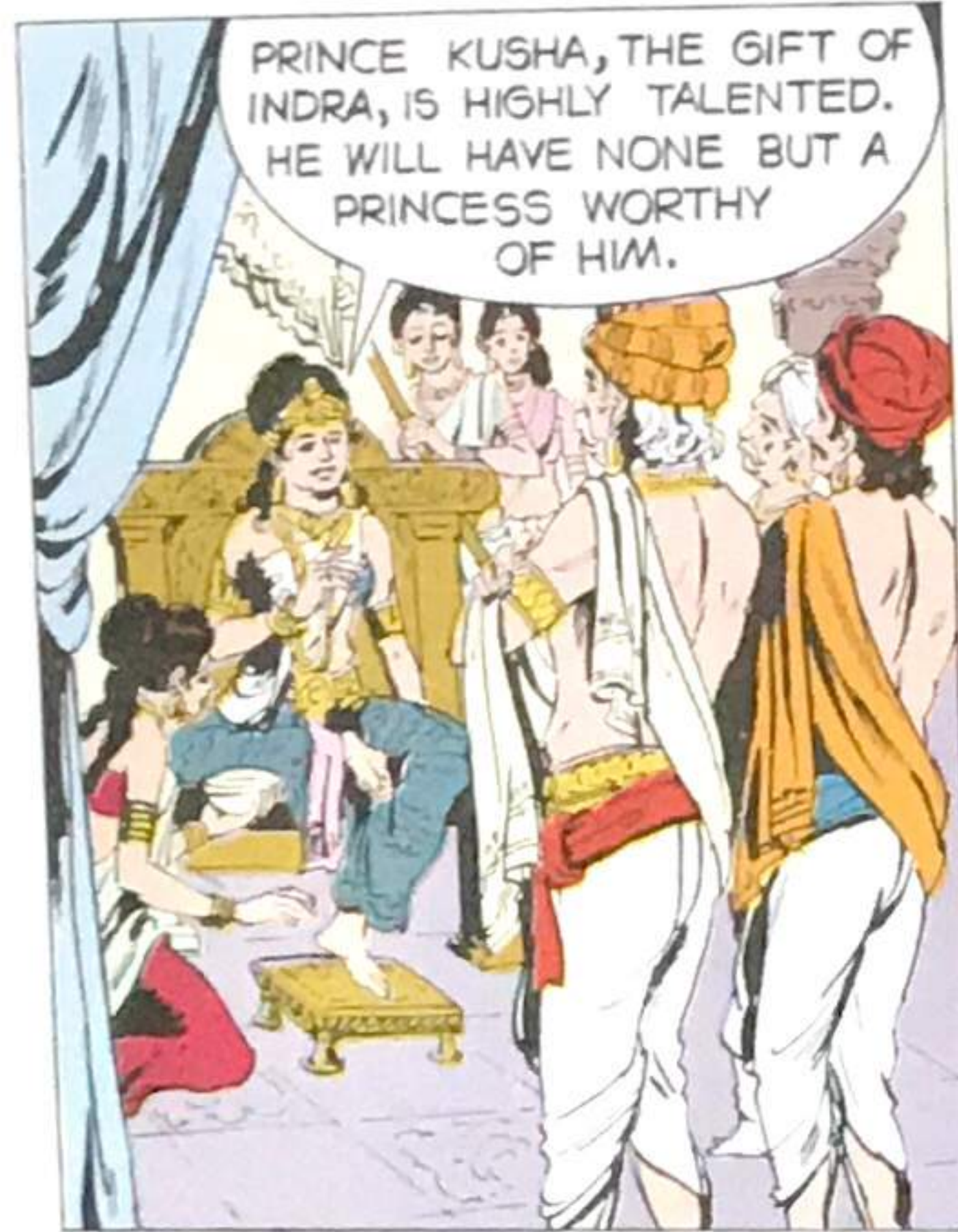
THEY WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND A PRINCESS HALF AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU!

HE THEN BROUGHT HIS MOTHER TO SEE IT.



IF YOU CAN FIND ME A PRINCESS AS BEAUTIFUL AS THIS, I'LL MARRY HER.





THE COUNCILLORS TRAVELLED FROM KINGDOM TO KINGDOM, EXHIBITING THE IMAGE, TILL AT LAST THEY ARRIVED AT SAGALA, THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF MADDA.



AS USUAL, THEY PLACED THE IMAGE AT A CONSPICUOUS SPOT. THEN—



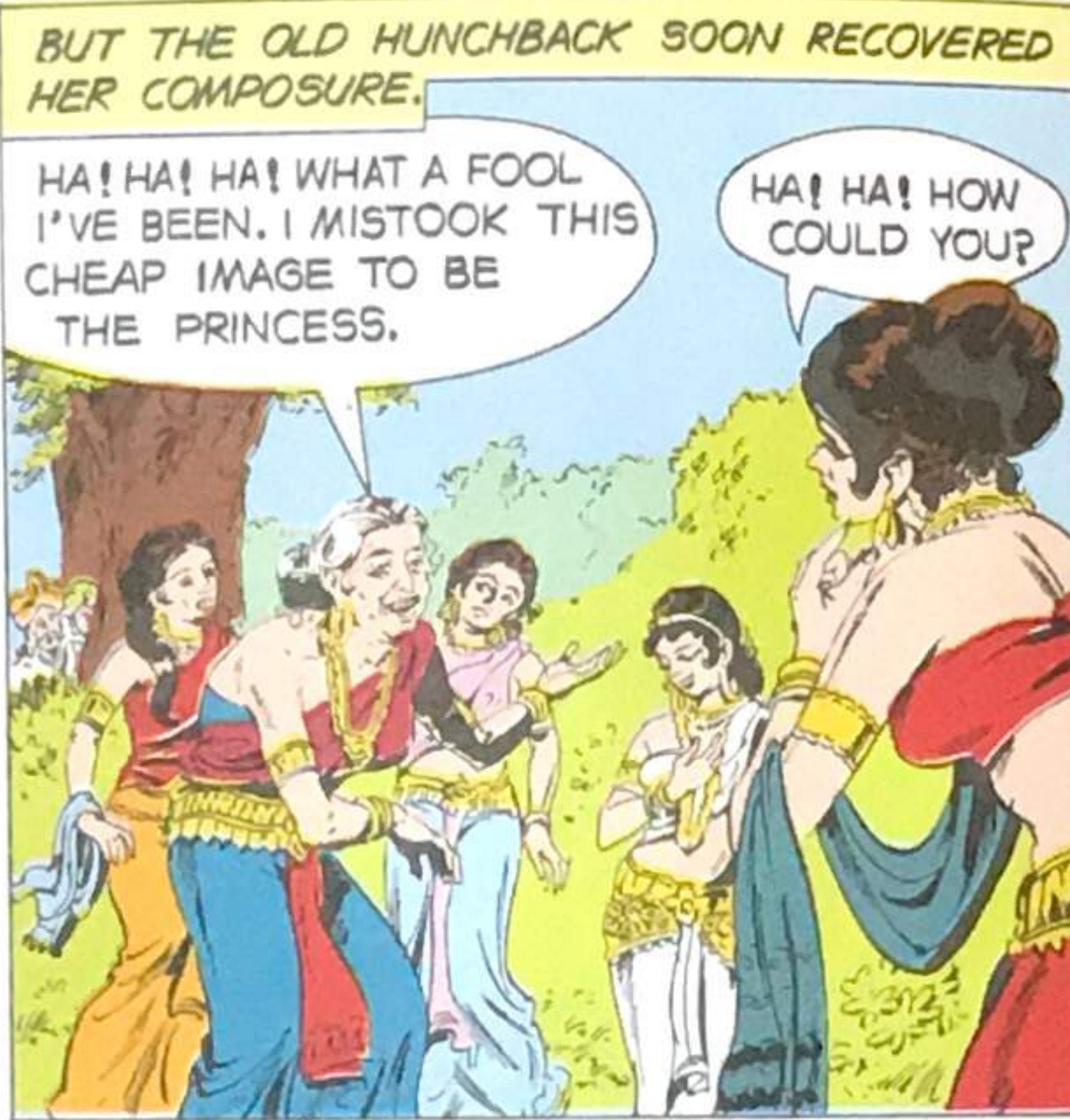
AFTER A WHILE, A HUNCHBACK FOLLOWED BY SEVEN OR EIGHT MAIDS CAME BY.







MADAM! WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOUR HAND! IT'S BRUISED AND BROKEN!



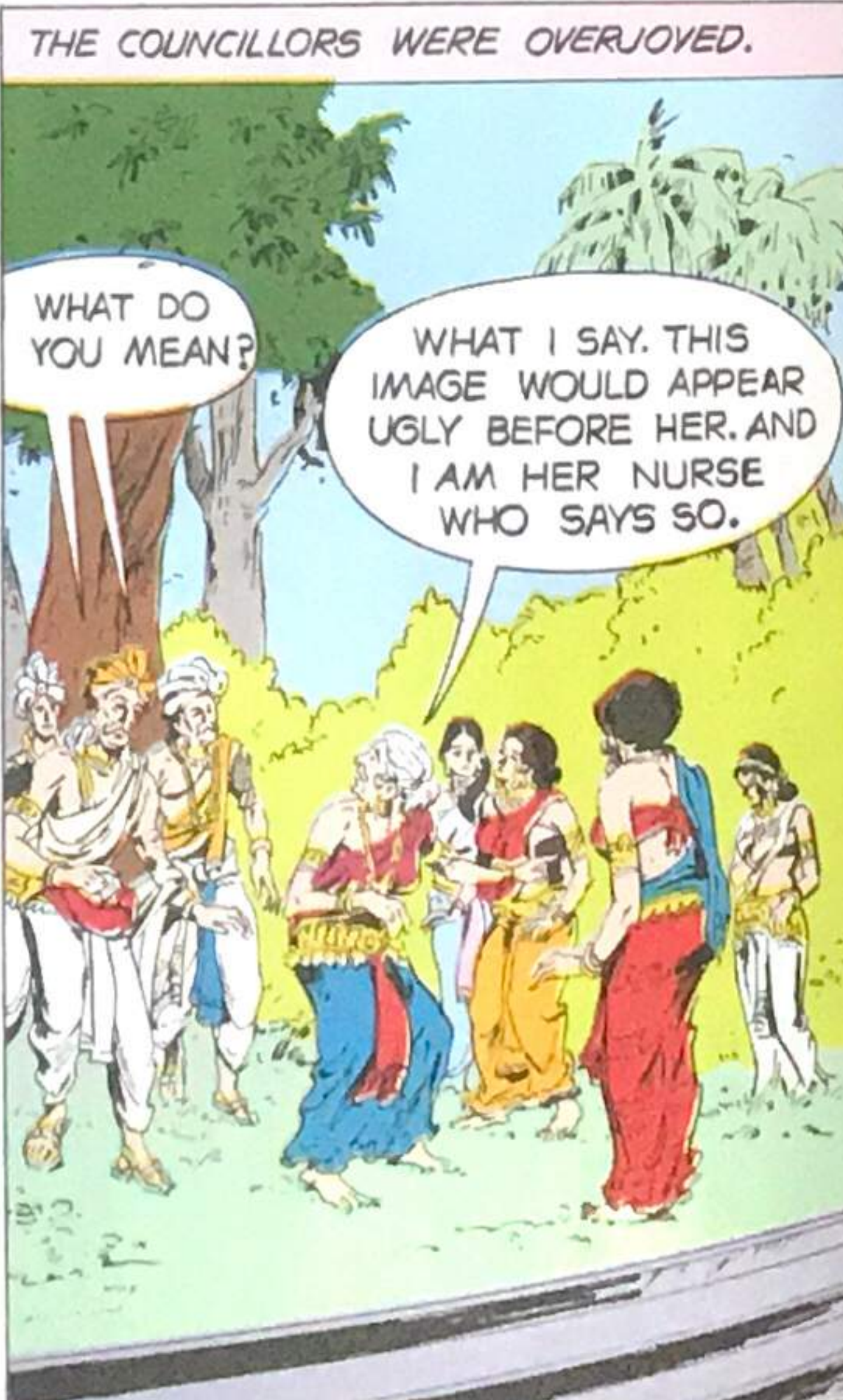
BUT THE OLD HUNCHBACK SOON RECOVERED HER COMPOSURE.

HA! HA! HA! WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN. I MISTOOK THIS CHEAP IMAGE TO BE THE PRINCESS.

HA! HA! HOW COULD YOU?



I HAVE HURT MY HANDS FOR INSULTING HER. WHAT IS THIS WORTHLESS IMAGE COMPARED TO MY DARLING PRABHAVATI!



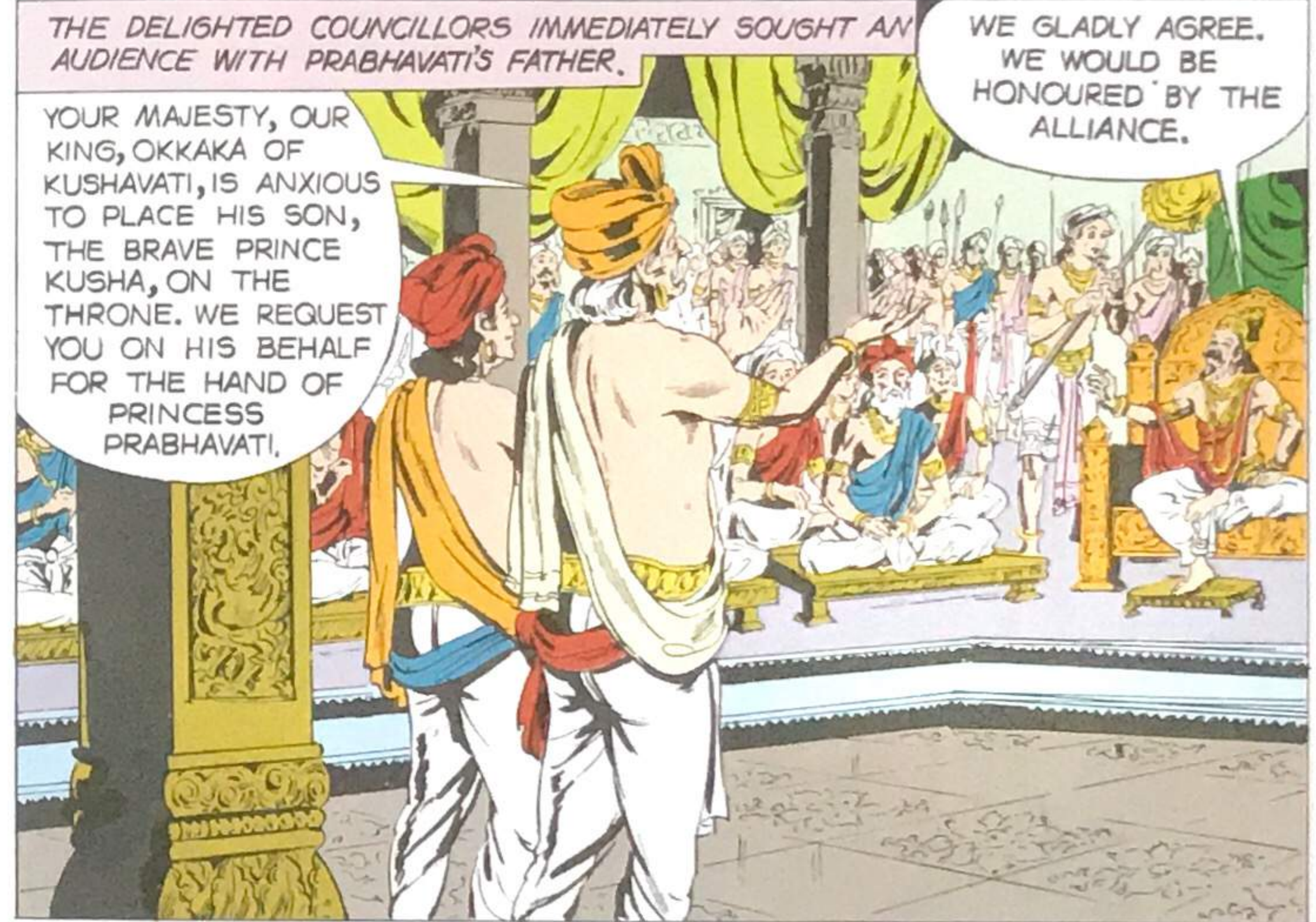
THE COUNCILLORS WERE OVERJOYED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHAT I SAY. THIS IMAGE WOULD APPEAR UGLY BEFORE HER. AND I AM HER NURSE WHO SAYS SO.

THE DELIGHTED COUNCILLORS IMMEDIATELY SOUGHT AN AUDIENCE WITH PRABHAVATI'S FATHER.

YOUR MAJESTY, OUR KING, OKKAKA OF KUSHAVATI, IS ANXIOUS TO PLACE HIS SON, THE BRAVE PRINCE KUSHA, ON THE THRONE. WE REQUEST YOU ON HIS BEHALF FOR THE HAND OF PRINCESS PRABHAVATI.



WE GLADLY AGREE. WE WOULD BE HONoured BY THE ALLIANCE.



BACK AT KUSHAVATI—

YOUR MAJESTY, WE HAVE FOUND HER—A PRINCESS MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE IMAGE!



WHEN KING OKKAKA AND QUEEN SHEELAVATI HEARD THE WHOLE STORY—

LET US SET OUT FOR SAGALA AT ONCE WITH A LARGE RETINUE.

YES! LET US NOT WASTE A MOMENT.



WHEN THEY REACHED SAGALA, THEY WERE RECEIVED GRACIOUSLY BY THE KING, THE QUEEN, PRINCESS PRABHAVATI AND HER SEVEN YOUNGER SISTERS.



LATER, WHEN PRABHAVATI CAME TO PAY HER RESPECTS TO SHEELAVATI —



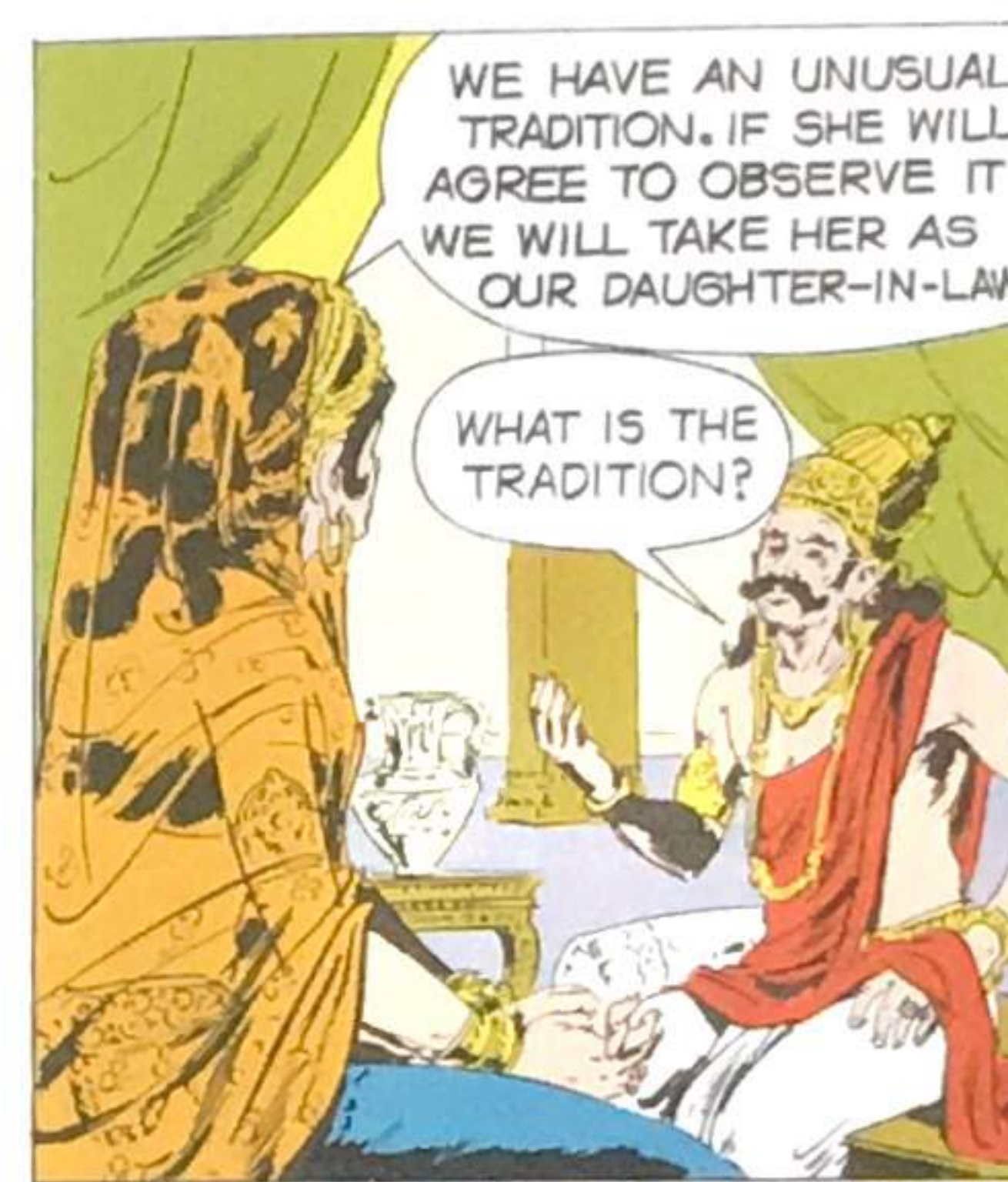
SHOULD THIS DAZZLING BEAUTY SEE MY SON'S FACE, SHE WILL RUN AWAY FROM HIM THAT VERY MOMENT. YET I MUST NOT FAIL MY SON. LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

WHEN PRABHAVATI HAD LEFT, SHEELAVATI SPOKE TO THE KING OF MADDA.



YOUR DAUGHTER IS WORTHY OF MY SON, BUT...

YES?



WE HAVE AN UNUSUAL TRADITION. IF SHE WILL AGREE TO OBSERVE IT WE WILL TAKE HER AS OUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

WHAT IS THE TRADITION?



A WIFE IS NOT PERMITTED TO SEE HER HUSBAND'S FACE TILL SHE HAS CONCEIVED. WILL SHE AGREE?

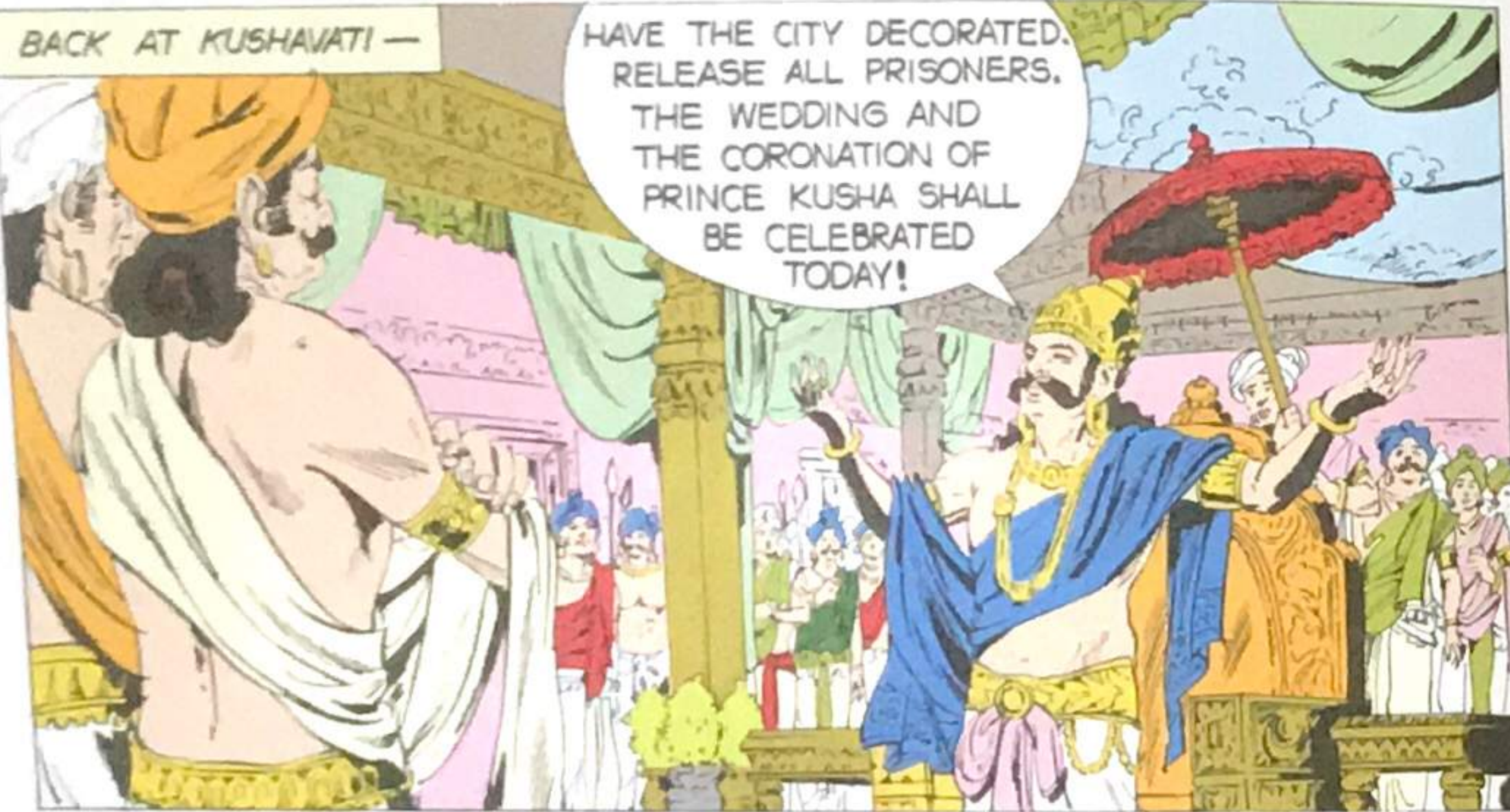
PRABHAVATI AGREED TO RESPECT THE TRADITION AND AFTER MUCH GIVING AND RECEIVING OF GIFTS, OKKAKA AND SHEELAVATI ESCORTED THEIR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, ALONG WITH HER NURSE AND A VAST RETINUE, TO KUSHAVATI.





BACK AT KUSHAVATI —

HAVE THE CITY DECORATED. RELEASE ALL PRISONERS. THE WEDDING AND THE CORONATION OF PRINCE KUSHA SHALL BE CELEBRATED TODAY!



NEITHER KUSHA NOR PRABHAVATI SAW EACH OTHER'S FACE. BUT—

HOW WELL HE PLAYS THE VEENA! HE MUST HAVE THE SENSITIVE FACE OF A MUSICIAN.



AH! I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW SHE LOOKS BY THINKING OF MY GOLDEN IMAGE.



A FEW DAYS AFTER THE WEDDING, KING KUSHA CAME TO SHEELAVATI.

MOTHER, PLEASE PERMIT ME TO LOOK AT MY WIFE BUT ONCE.

YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL SHE HAS CONCEIVED.



\* LUTE-LIKE INSTRUMENT

I CANNOT WAIT TILL THEN, MOTHER.



ALL RIGHT. GO TO THE ELEPHANT STALLS DISGUISED AS A KEEPER. I WILL BRING PRABHAVATI THERE BUT SEE THAT YOU DO NOT MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN TO HER.



SHEELAVATI THEN WENT TO PRABHAVATI.

YOU HAVE NOT YET SEEN YOUR LORD'S ELEPHANTS. COME, I WILL SHOW THEM TO YOU.



WHEN KUSHA SAW PRABHAVATI AS SHE WALKED BEHIND HIS MOTHER, HE WAS ENCHANTED.

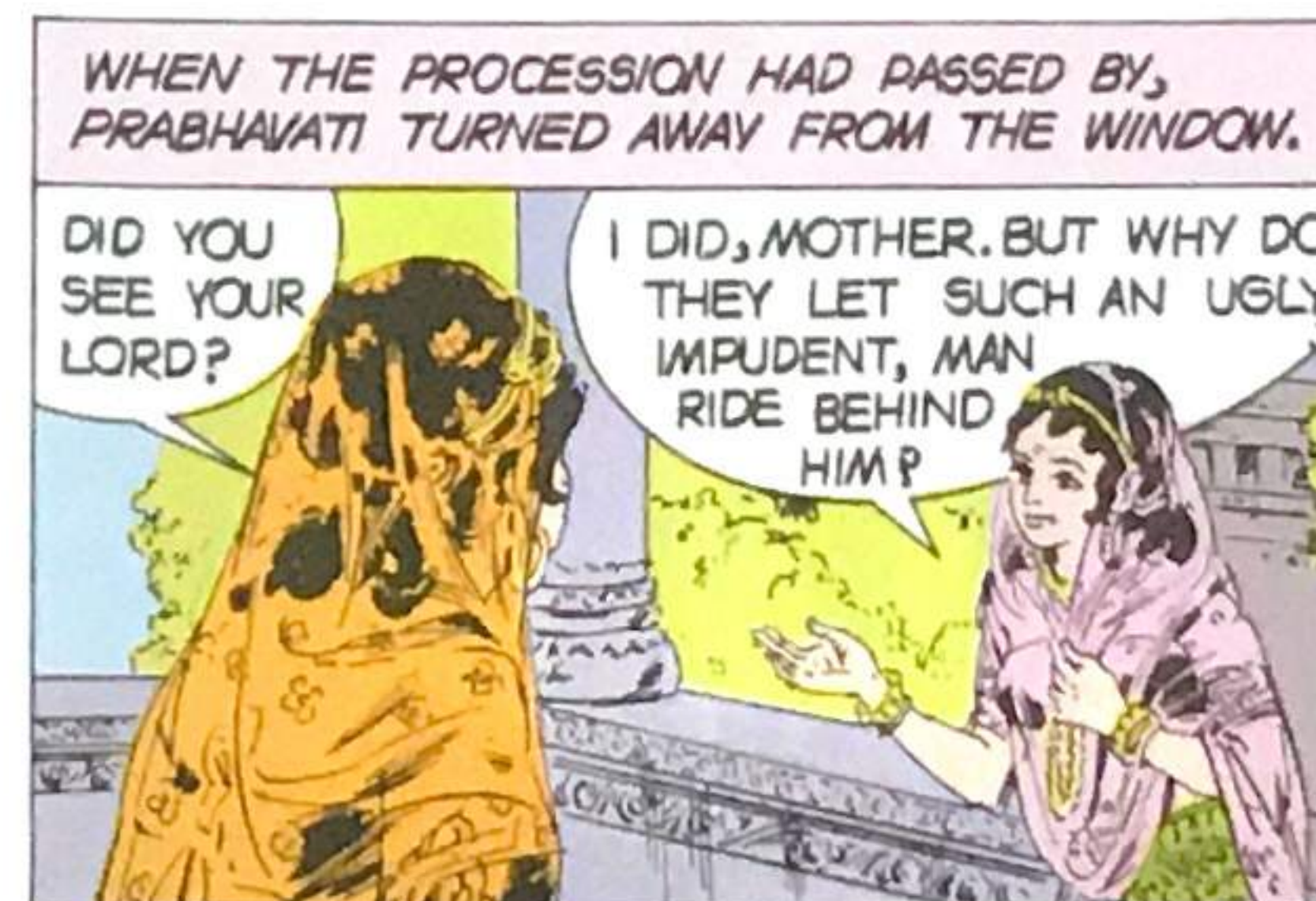
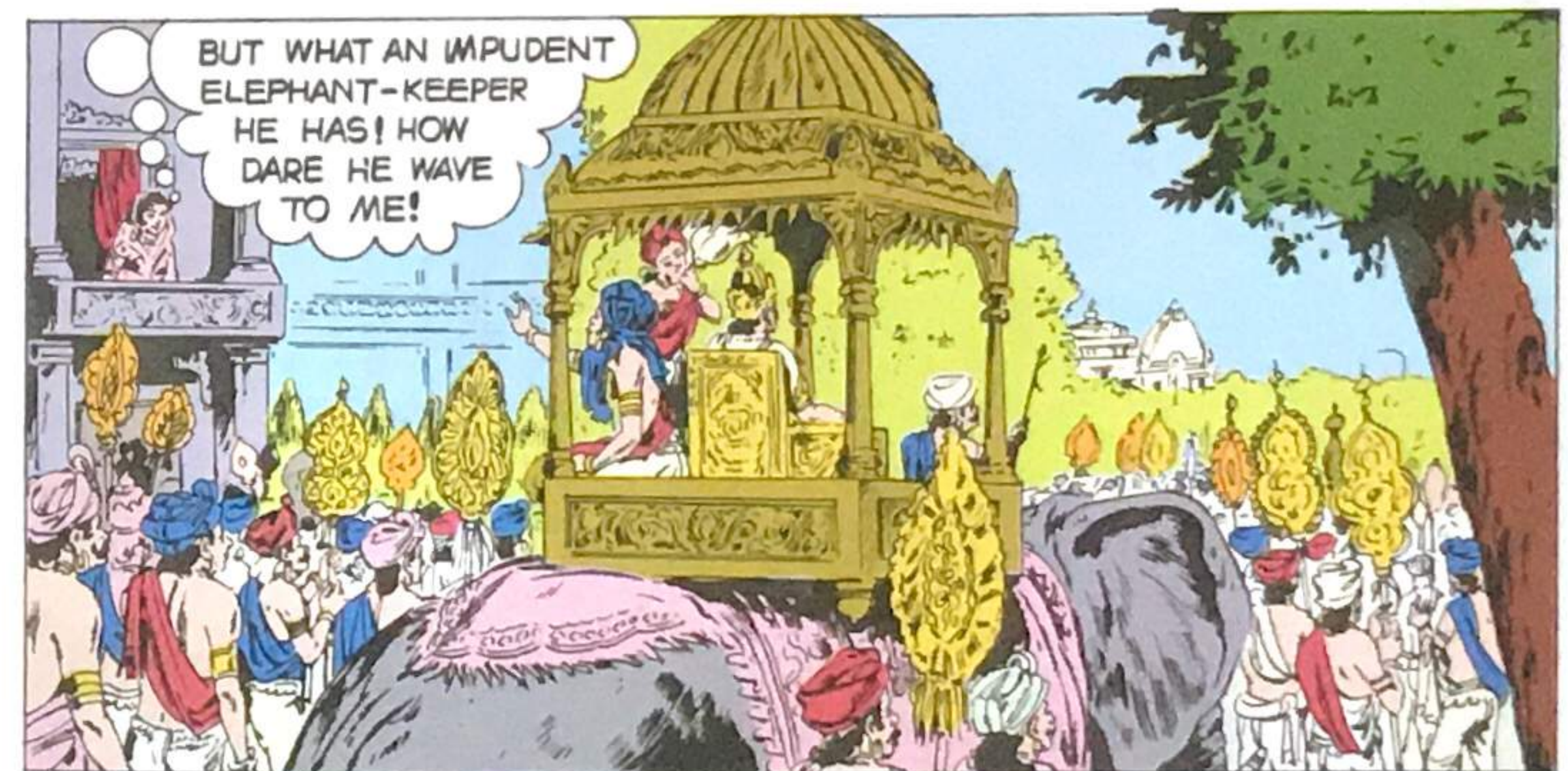
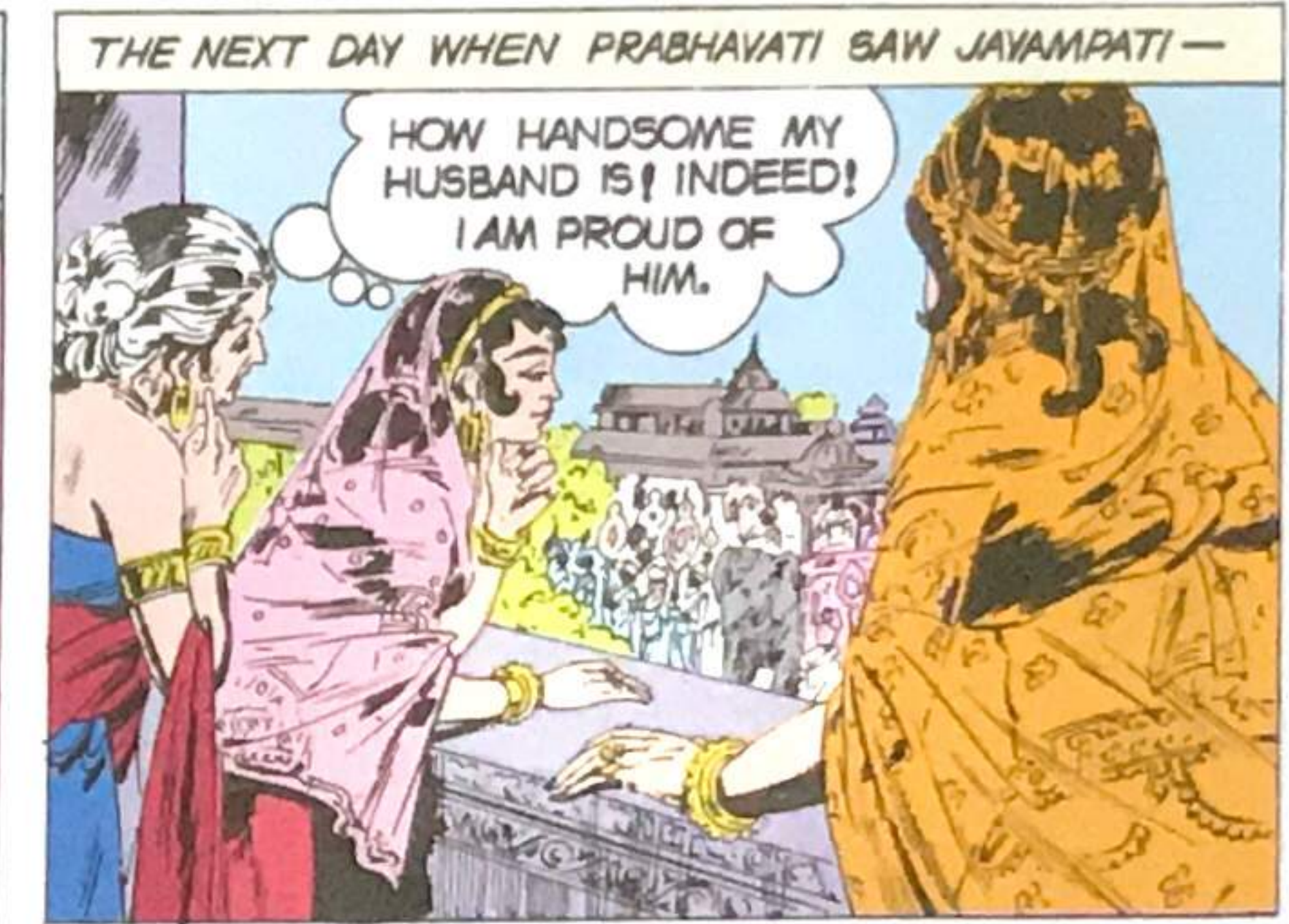
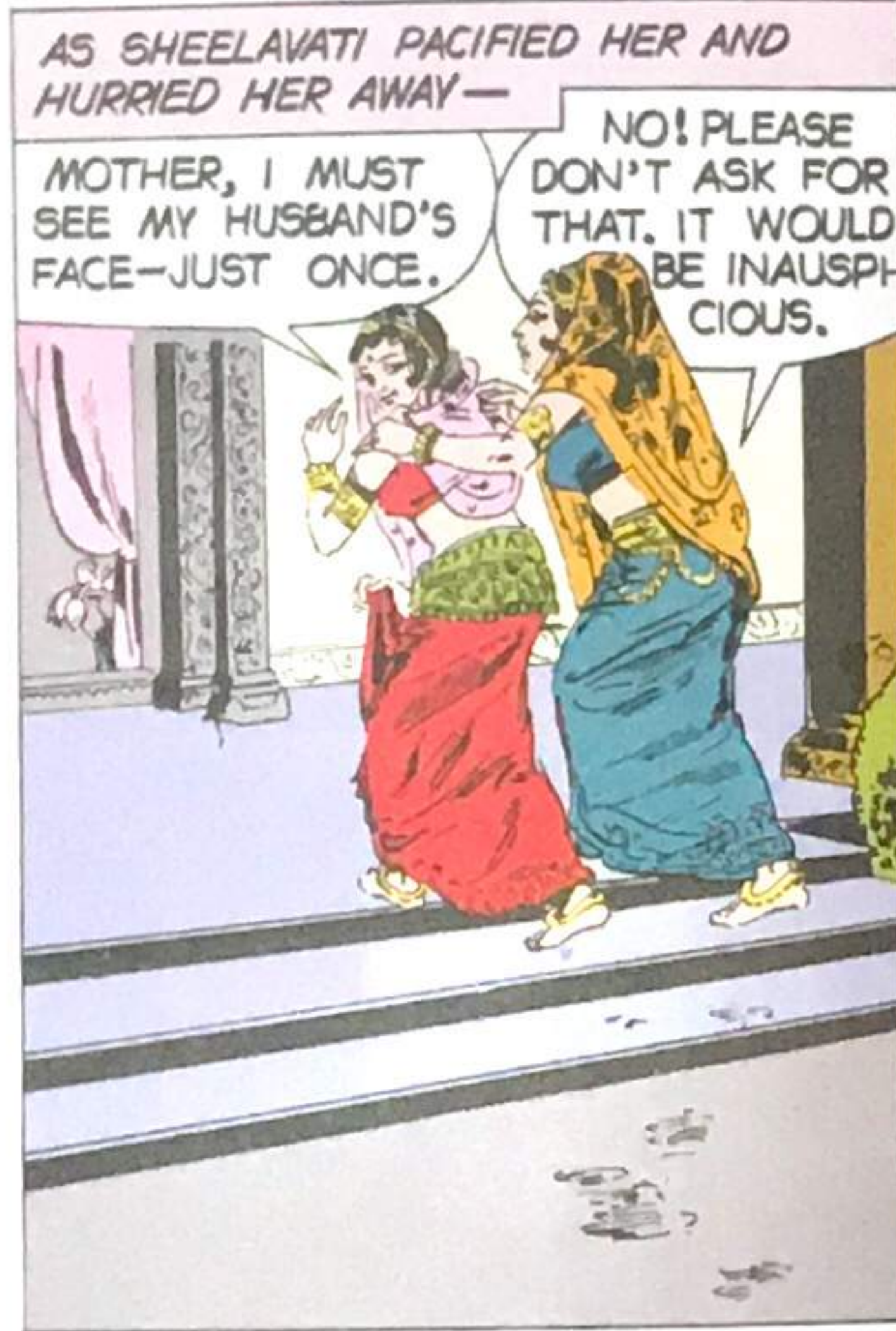
IS SHE A PRINCESS OR A GODDESS?



DETERMINED TO FIND OUT, HE PICKED UP A HANDFUL OF DUNG AND FLUNG IT AT HER.









BUT PRABHAVATI WAS NOT CONVINCED.

NO MAN WOULD BE ALLOWED TO BEHAVE LIKE THAT HOWEVER EXCELLENT HIS SERVICES MIGHT BE. CAN IT BE THAT HE IS KING KUSHA AND THEY DO NOT LET ME SEE HIM BECAUSE HE IS SO UGLY?



SHE TURNED TO HER NURSE.

RUN, MY DEAR. FIND OUT WHO WAS THE KING—THE MAN IN FRONT OR THE ONE BEHIND.

HOW AM I TO FIND OUT?



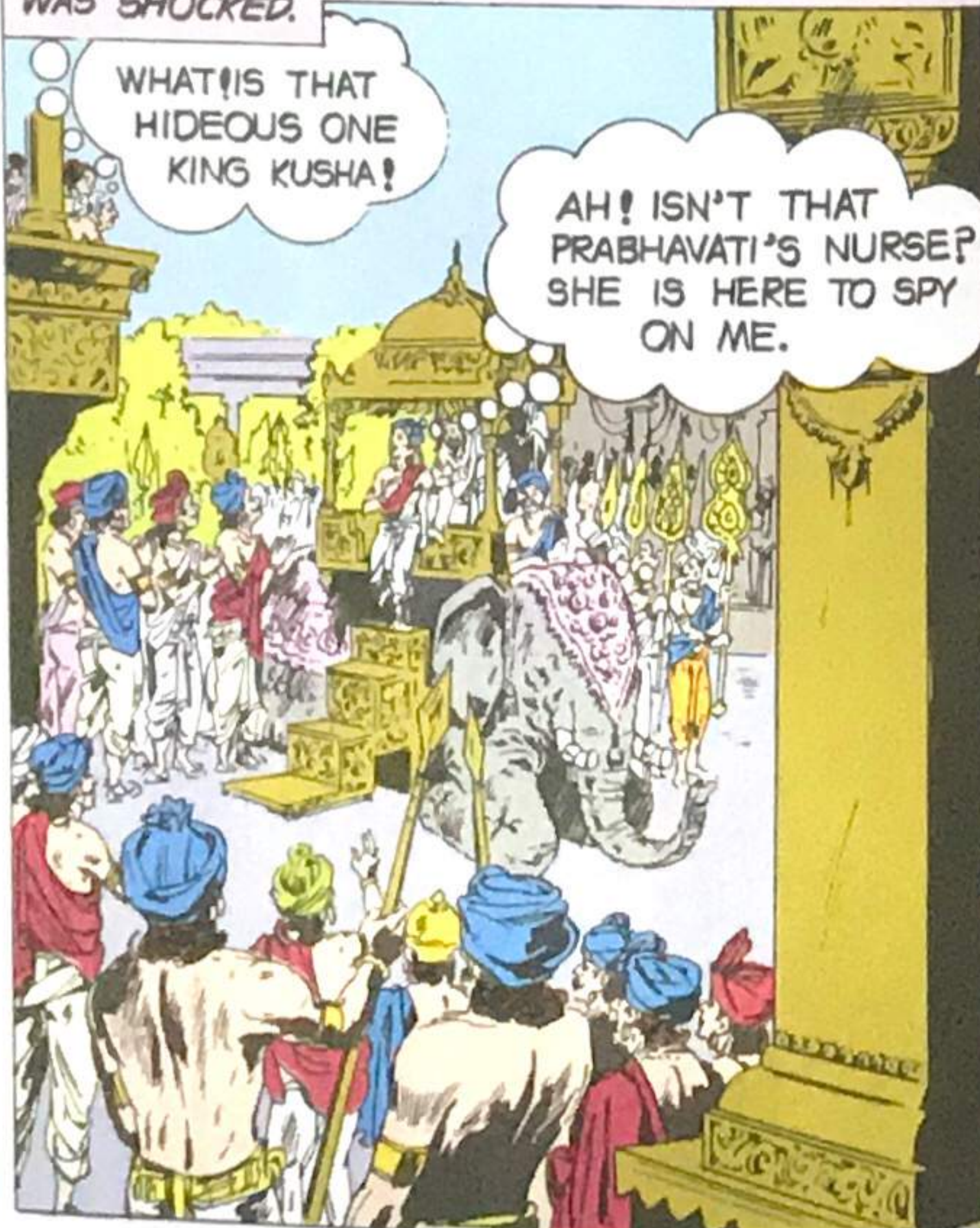
THE KING WILL BE THE FIRST TO ALIGHT FROM THE ELEPHANT. GO. DON'T WASTE ANY MORE TIME.



WHEN THE NURSE SAW KUSHA ALIGHT FIRST, SHE WAS SHOCKED.

WHAT! IS THAT HIDEOUS ONE KING KUSHA?

AH! ISN'T THAT PRABHAVATI'S NURSE? SHE IS HERE TO SPY ON ME.



HE SENT FOR HER.

I CHARGE YOU ON PAIN OF DEATH NOT TO REVEAL MY SECRET.



SHE WENT BACK TO PRABHAVATI WHO EAGERLY AWAITED HER RETURN.

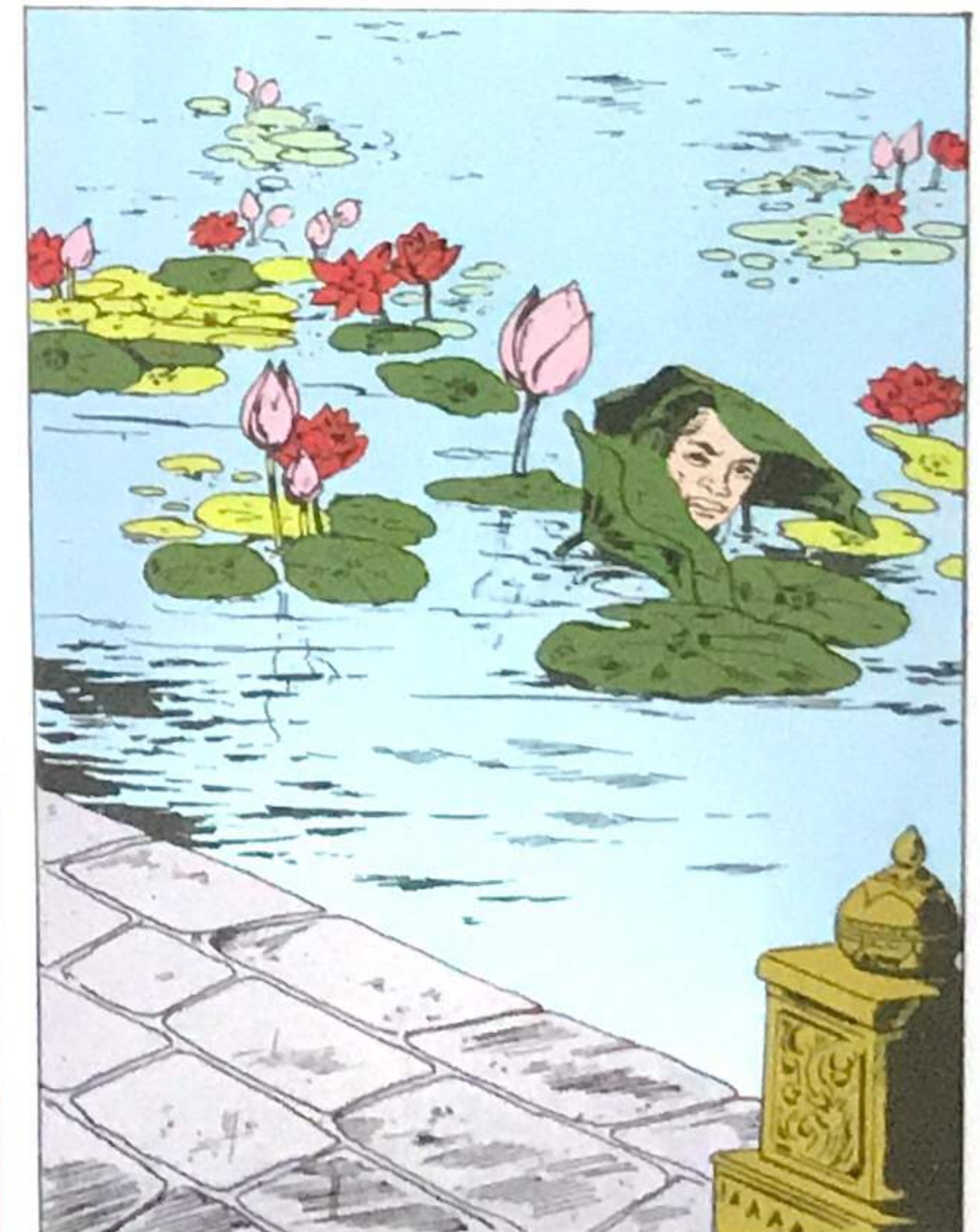
THE ONE THAT SAT IN FRONT WAS THE FIRST TO ALIGHT.

THANK GOD!



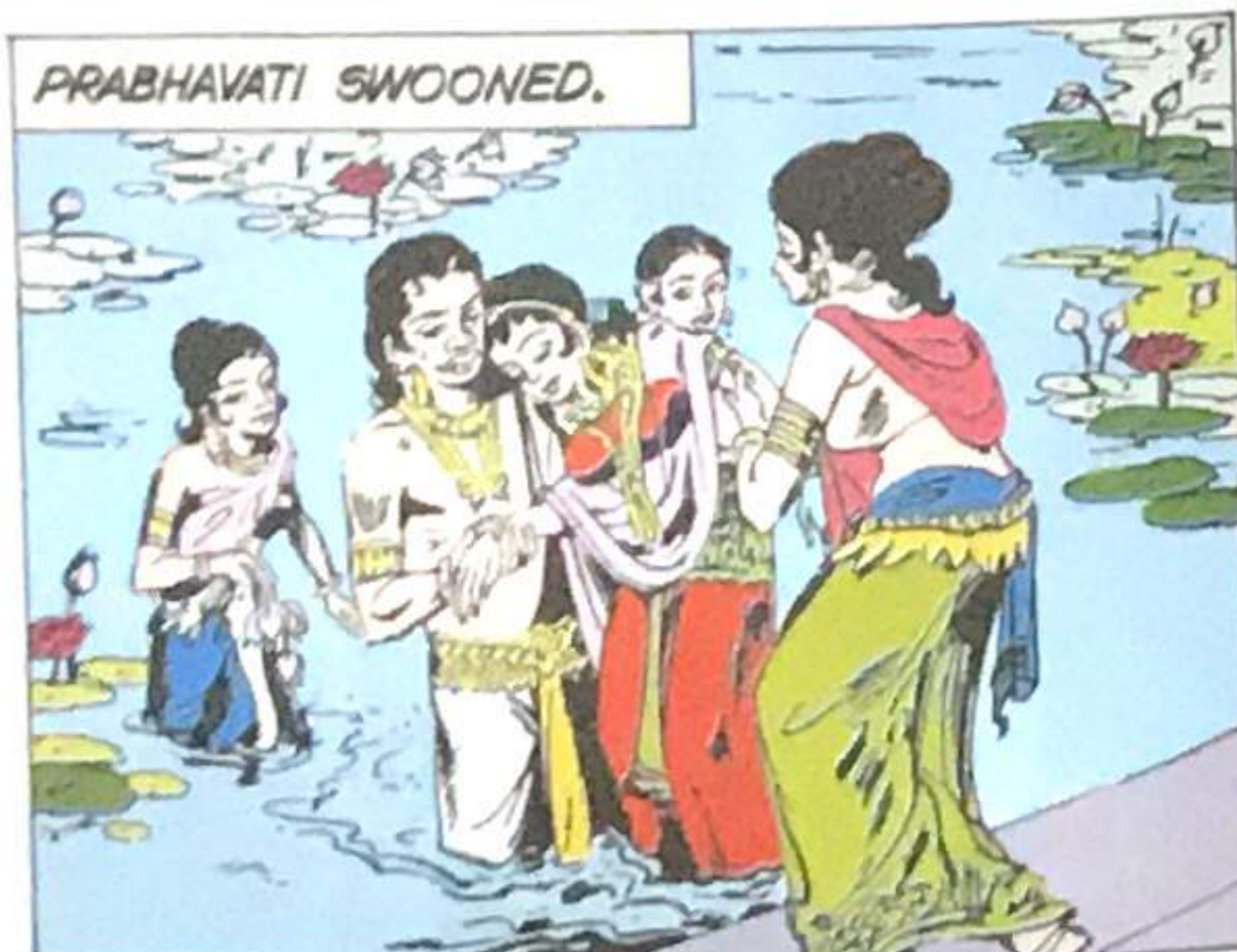
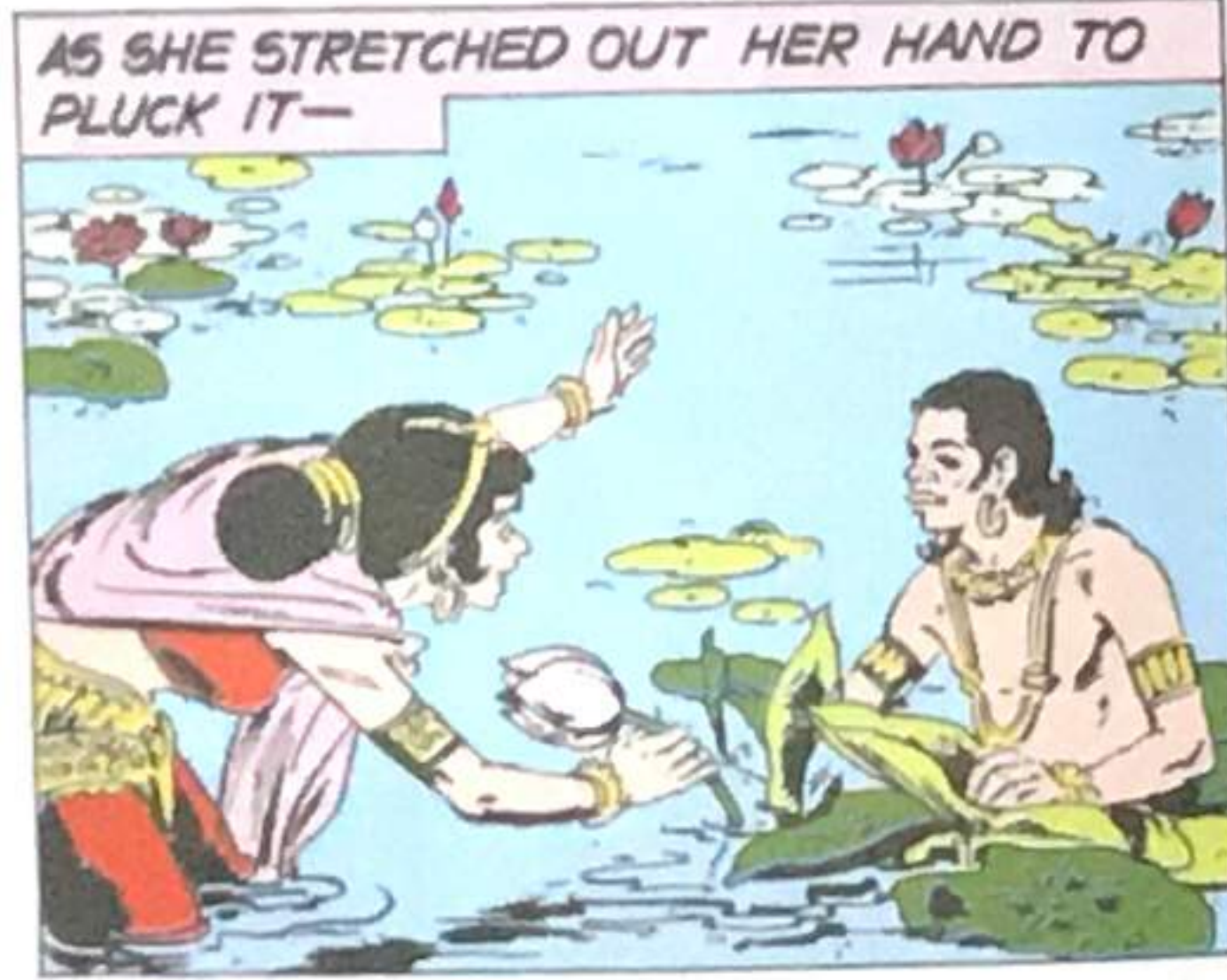
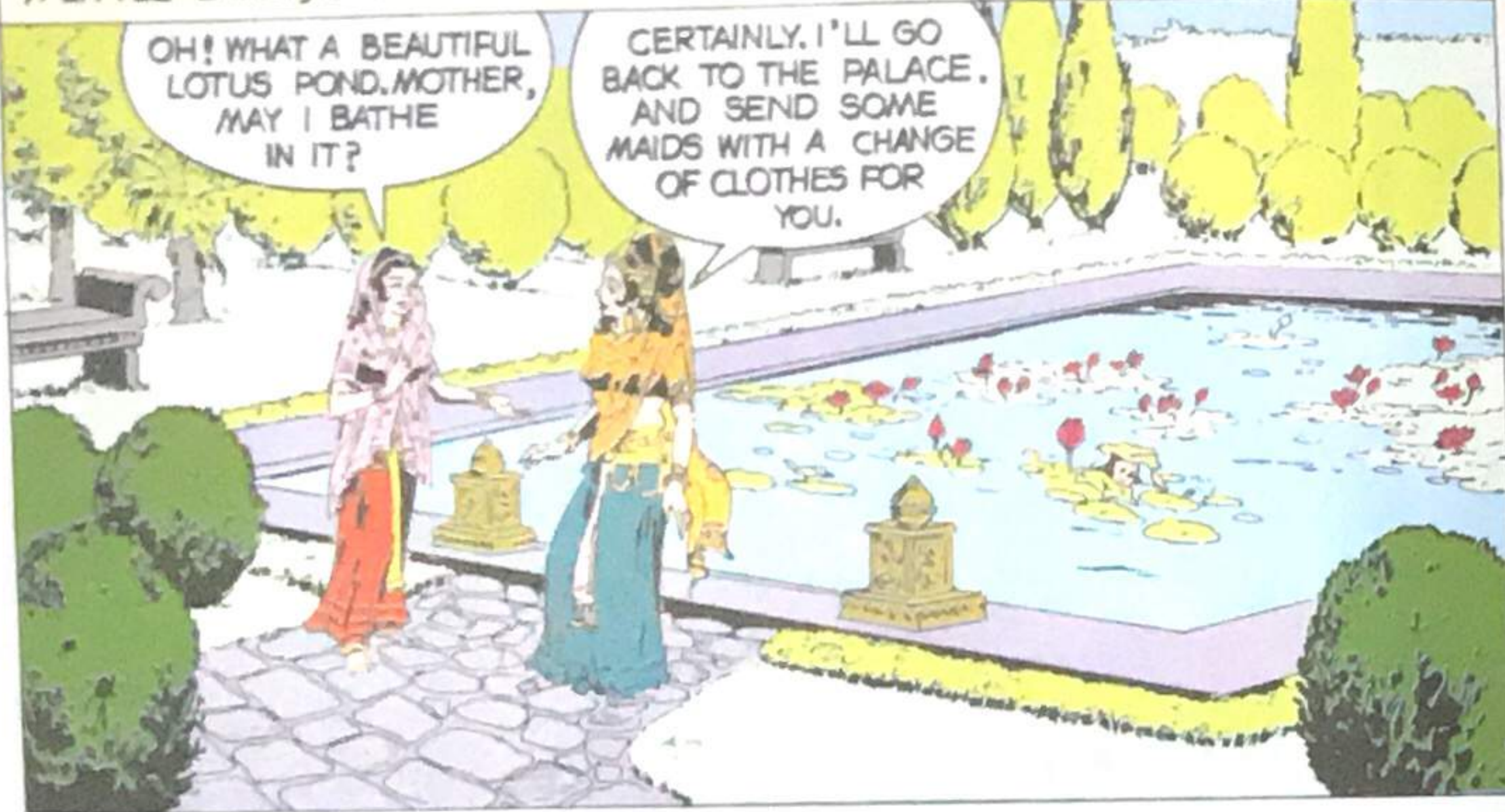
THE SECOND SIGHT OF PRABHAVATI MADE KUSHA WANT TO SEE HER YET AGAIN. HE SPOKE TO HIS MOTHER.

WELL THEN, IF YOU MUST, ENTER THE LOTUS POOL, CONCEAL YOURSELF AND WAIT.





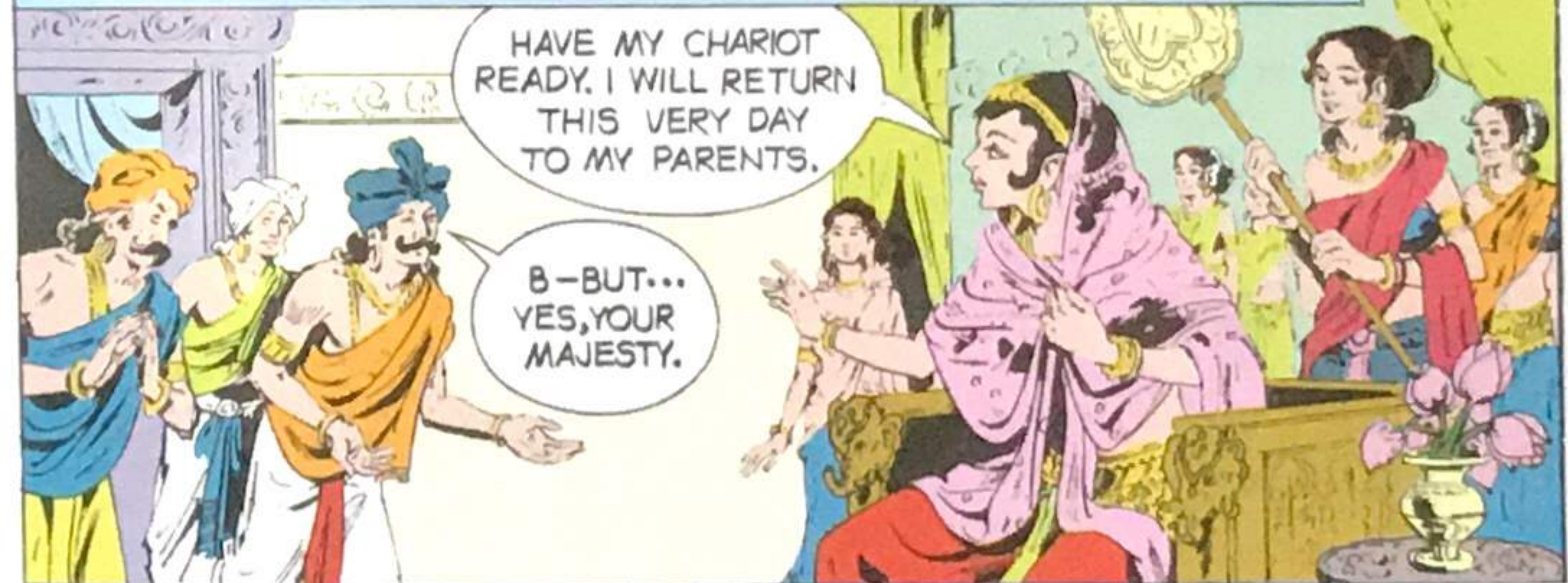
A LITTLE LATER, SHEELAVATI BROUGHT PRABHAVATI TO THE GARDEN.



WHEN SHE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, SHE FOUND HERSELF IN HER CHAMBER SURROUNDED BY HER NURSE AND HER MAIDS.



SHE SUMMONED THE COUNCILLORS WHO HAD SPOKEN TO HER FATHER.



NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO, THEY WENT AND CONSULTED KUSHA.





THOUGH KUSHA SO KIND-HEARTEDLY LET PRABHAVATI GO, HE WAS DESOLATE. TWO DAYS LATER —

BY THIS TIME SHE WILL HAVE REACHED SAGALA.



HE WENT TO HIS MOTHER.

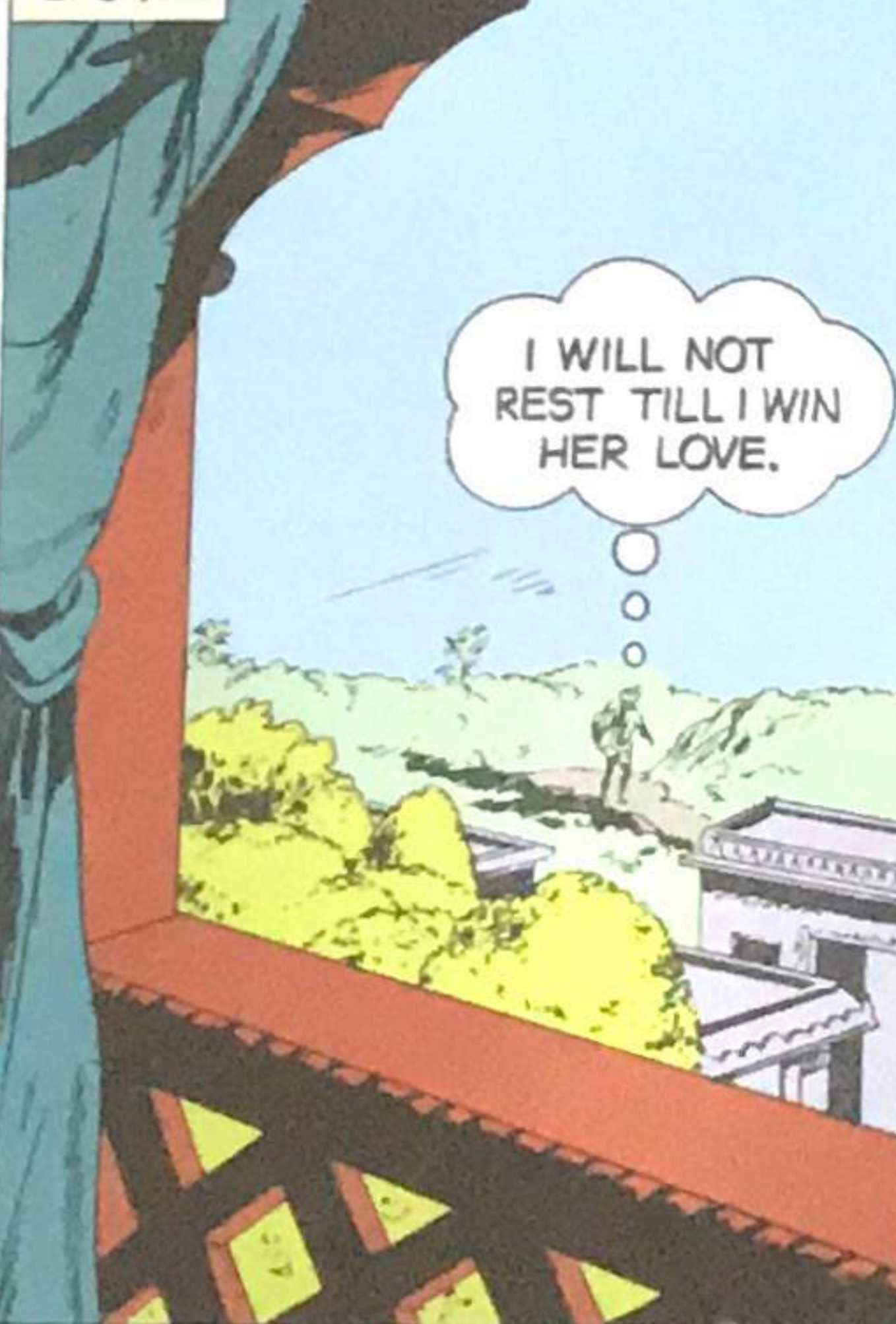
MOTHER, I WILL GO AND BRING PRABHAVATI BACK, WITH HER CONSENT.

GO, MY SON. BUT TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.



EQUIPPING HIMSELF WITH ALL THAT HE WOULD NEED, KUSHA SET OUT FOR SAGALA.

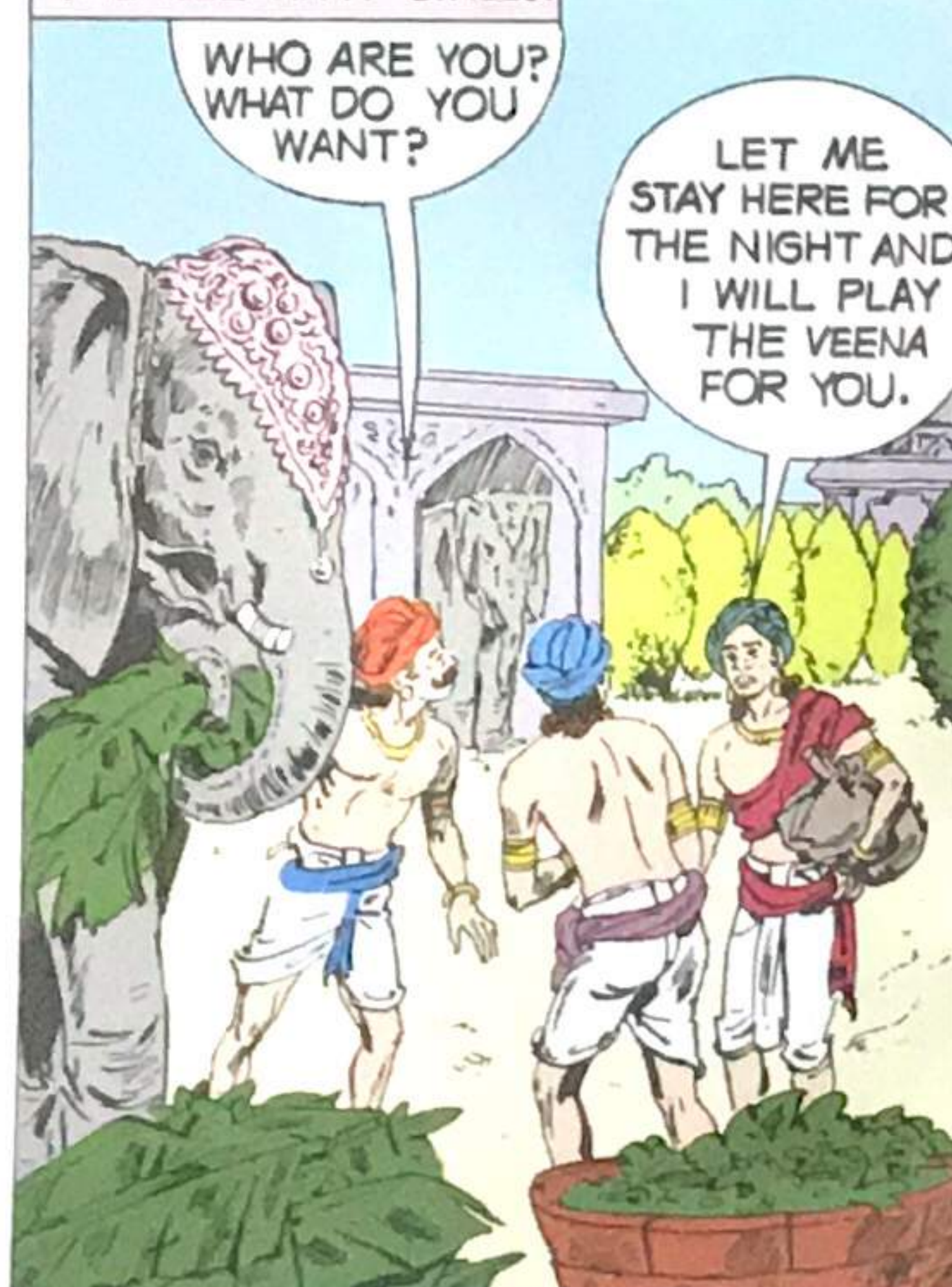
I WILL NOT REST TILL I WIN HER LOVE.



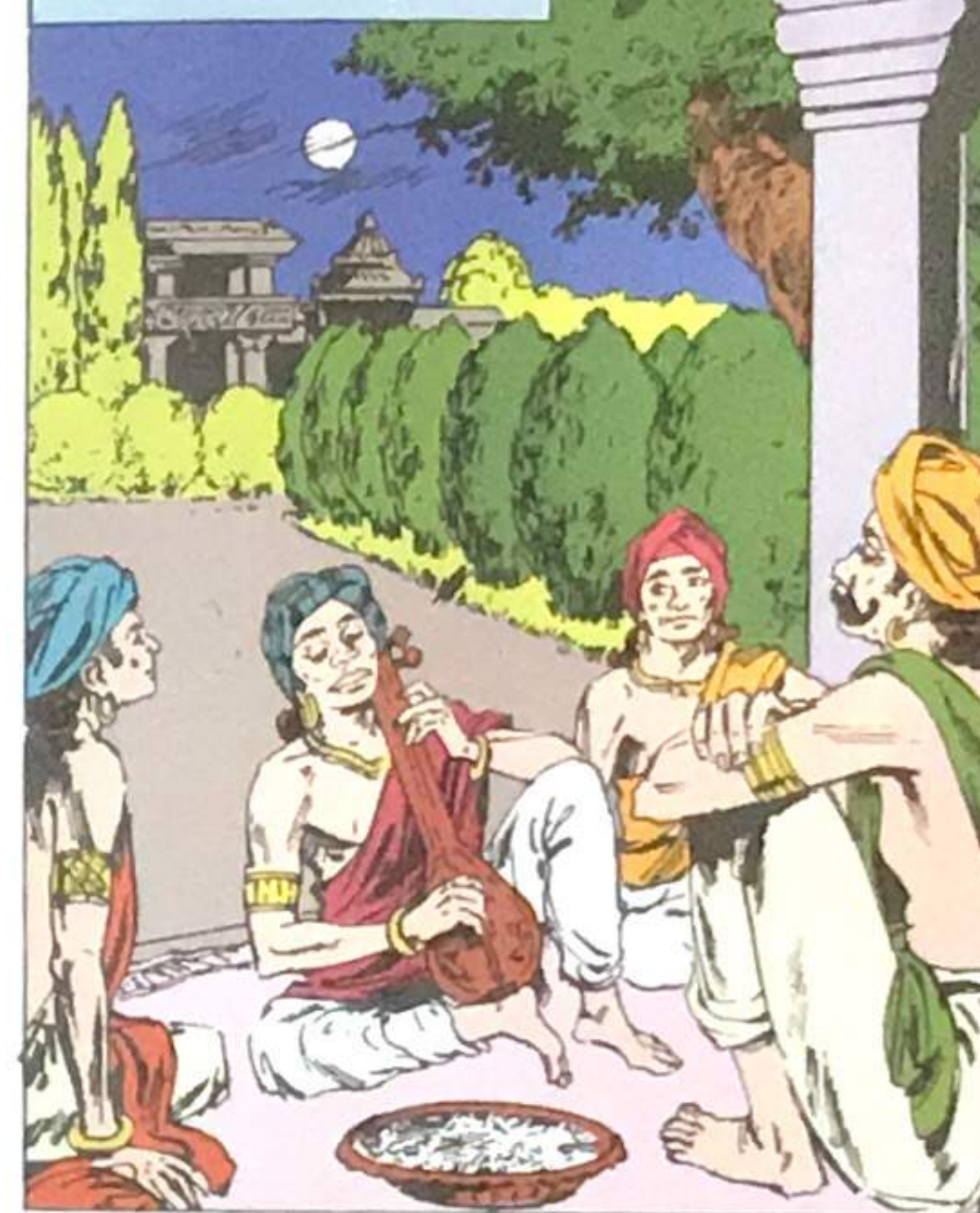
WHEN HE REACHED SAGALA, HE ENTERED THE PALACE AND FOUND HIS WAY TO THE ELEPHANT STALLS.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

LET ME STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT AND I WILL PLAY THE VEENA FOR YOU.



THEY AGREED. KUSHA TUNED HIS VEENA AND BEGAN TO PLAY.



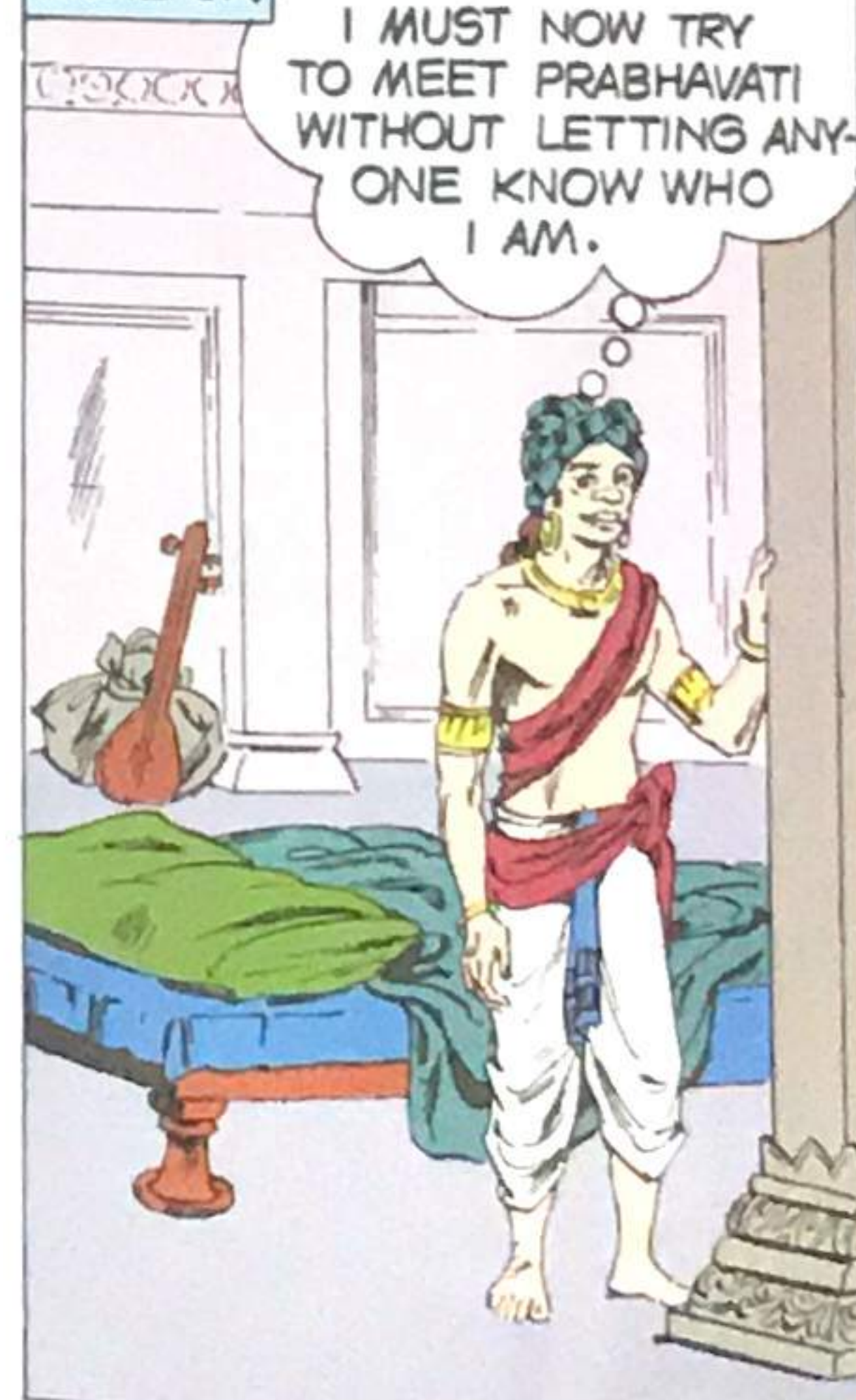
IN THE PALACE, PRABHAVATI SUDDENLY WOKE UP.

THOSE PURE NOTES. THEY CAN ONLY COME FROM HIS VEENA. HOW I LOVED TO HEAR THEM TILL I SAW HIS FACE. HE HAS FOLLOWED ME HERE.



EARLY NEXT MORNING, KUSHA WOKE UP.

I MUST NOW TRY TO MEET PRABHAVATI WITHOUT LETTING ANYONE KNOW WHO I AM.



HE WENT TO THE ROYAL POTTER AND BECAME HIS APPRENTICE. A FEW DAYS LATER —

WHY, MY SON, YOU ARE TALENTED! THESE VASES ARE BEAUTIFUL! I SHALL TAKE THEM TO THE PALACE RIGHT AWAY.

MASTER, DO NOT FORGET. THIS ONE WITH THESE FIGURES IS FOR PRINCESS PRABHAVATI. I MADE IT SPECIALLY FOR HER.





AT THE PALACE—



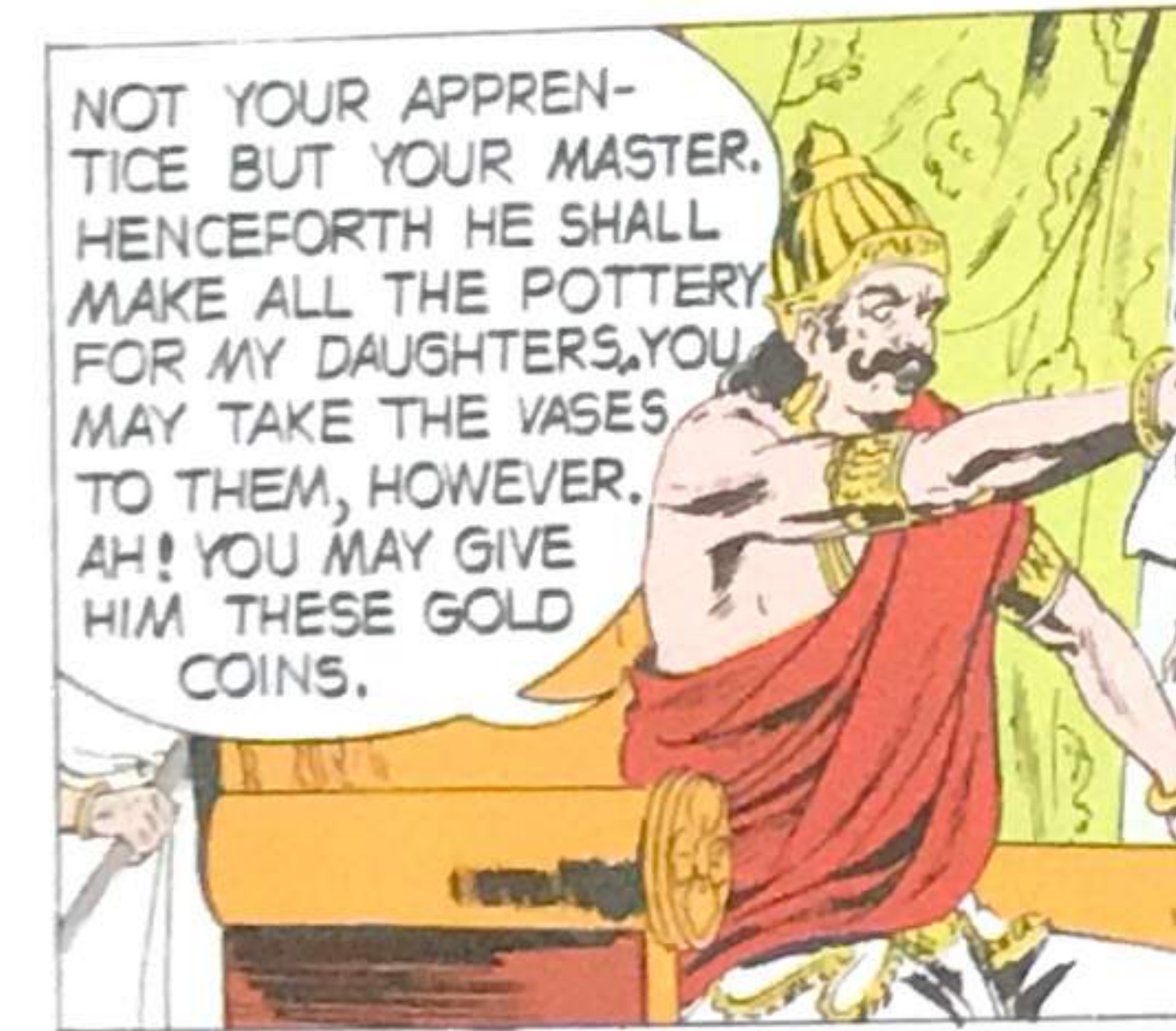
WHO HAS MADE THESE EXQUISITE VASES?

I HAVE, YOUR MAJESTY.

THIS IS NOT YOUR HANDI-WORK. TELL ME THE TRUTH. WHO MADE THEM?



M - MY APPRENTICE, YOUR MAJESTY.



NOT YOUR APPRENTICE BUT YOUR MASTER. HENCEFORTH HE SHALL MAKE ALL THE POTTERY FOR MY DAUGHTERS. YOU MAY TAKE THE VASES TO THEM, HOWEVER. AH! YOU MAY GIVE HIM THESE GOLD COINS.



WHEN THE PRINCESSES SAW THE VASES—



HOW DELIGHTFUL THEY ARE!

LOOK AT THIS ONE. I'LL KEEP IT.

SUCH EXQUISITE WORKMANSHIP!



THE POTTER CAME UP TO PRABHAVATI.



THIS HE MADE SPECIALLY FOR YOU, O PRINCESS PRABHAVATI.

WHY, THESE FIGURES...! THEY RESEMBLE ME AND MY NURSE... ONLY HE COULD HAVE MADE THESE!

SHE BECAME TERRIBLY ANGRY AND FLUNG THE VASE TO THE FLOOR.



I DON'T WANT IT. IT'S HIDEOUS.

HA! HA! OUR SISTER BEHAVES AS IF IT WERE A GIFT FROM KING KUSHA HIMSELF.



THE POTTER RETURNED AND TOLD KUSHA ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED AT THE PALACE.

...BUT THE KING CERTAINLY LIKED YOUR WORK. HERE, THESE GOLD COINS ARE A GIFT TO YOU FROM HIM.



YOU MAY KEEP THE MONEY.

IT'S NO USE MY STAYING HERE. I'D BETTER TRY FROM ELSEWHERE.





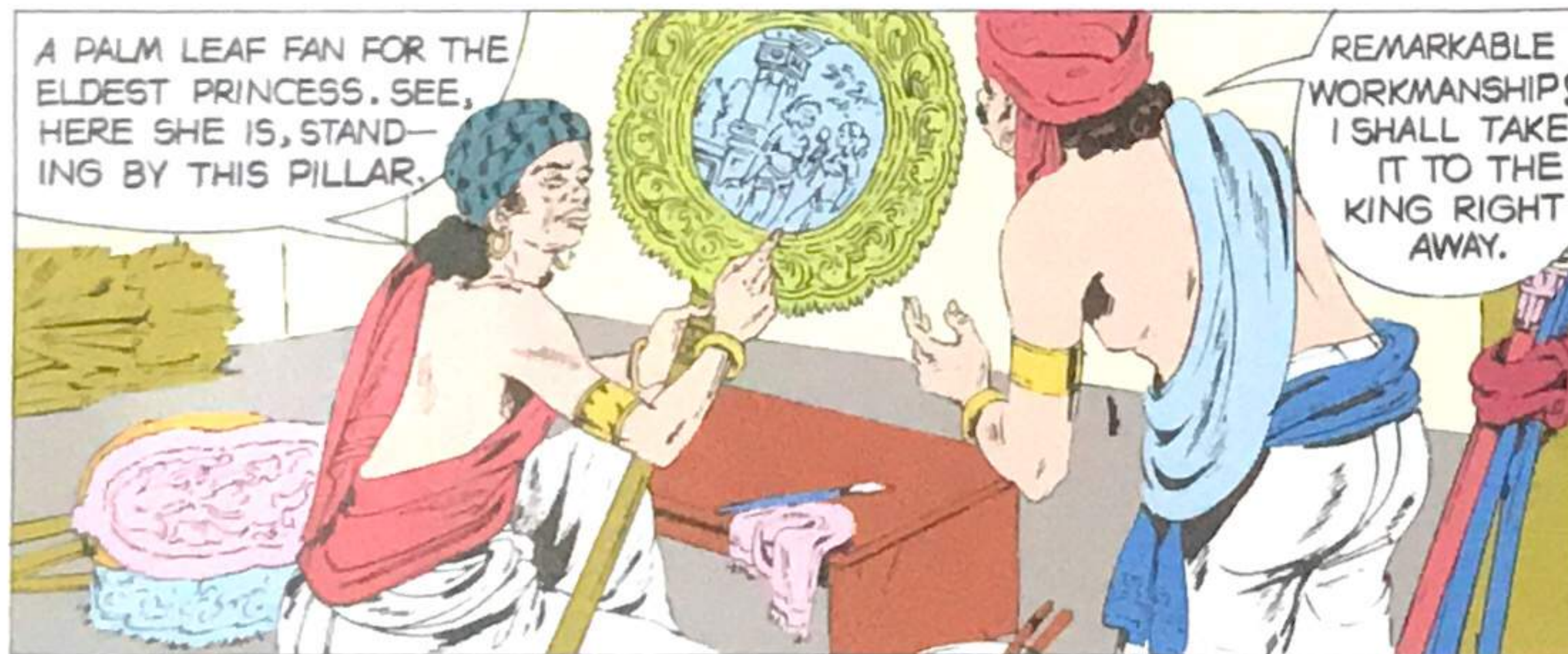
KUSHA LEFT THE POTTER AND APPRENTICED HIMSELF TO THE ROYAL WICKER-  
WORKER. A FEW DAYS LATER—



WHOEVER HE IS, HE IS  
THE BEST WORKER I'VE  
HAD SO FAR. HOW  
DEFTLY HIS  
FINGERS  
MOVE.

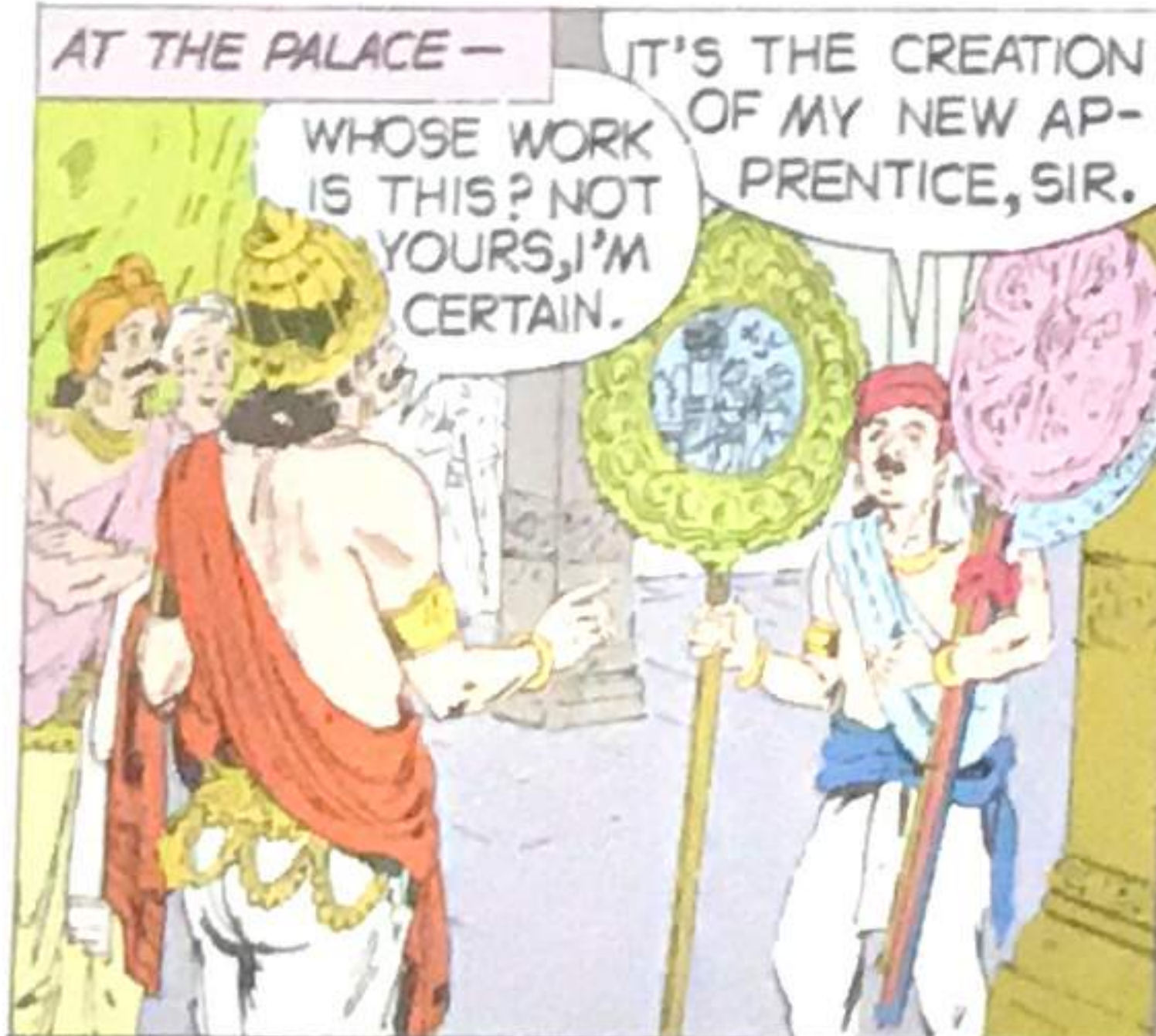
WHAT ARE YOU  
MAKING?

A PALM LEAF FAN FOR THE  
ELDEST PRINCESS. SEE,  
HERE SHE IS, STAND-  
ING BY THIS PILLAR.



REMARKABLE  
WORKMANSHIP!  
I SHALL TAKE  
IT TO THE  
KING RIGHT  
AWAY.

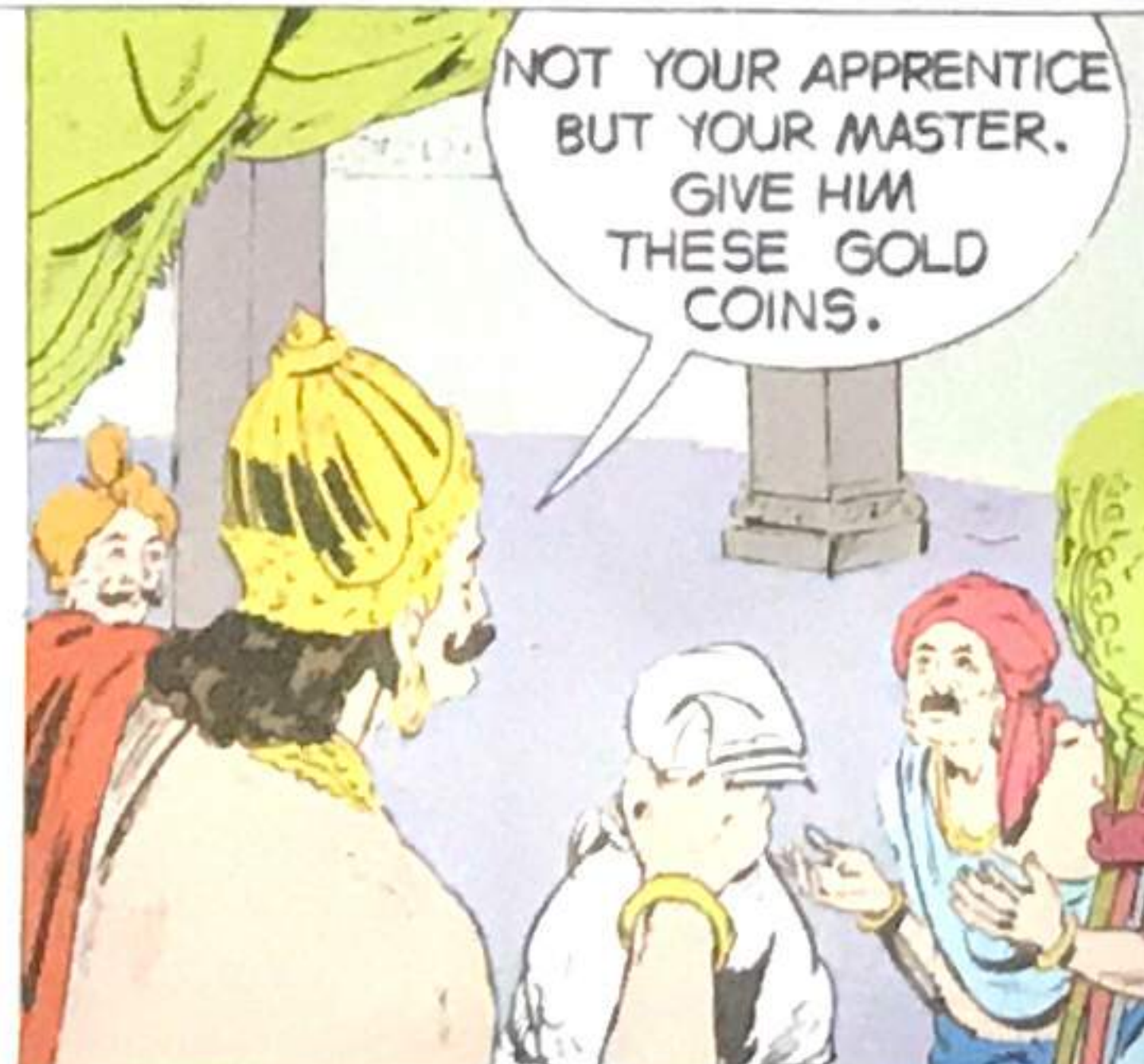
AT THE PALACE—



WHOSE WORK  
IS THIS? NOT  
YOURS, I'M  
CERTAIN.

IT'S THE CREATION  
OF MY NEW AP-  
PRENTICE, SIR.

NOT YOUR APPRENTICE  
BUT YOUR MASTER.  
GIVE HIM  
THESE GOLD  
COINS.

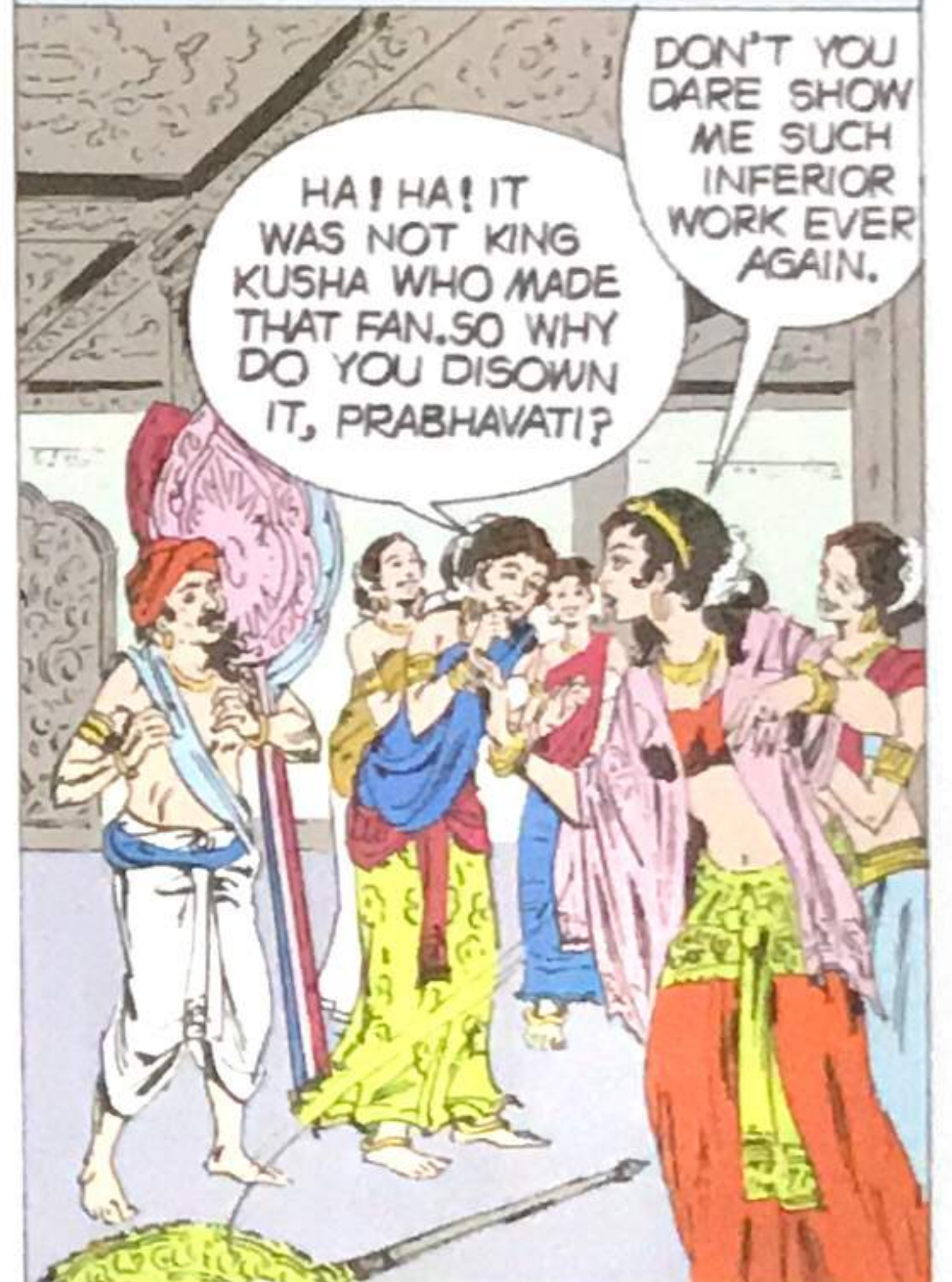


THE MOMENT PRABHAVATI SAW THE FAN,  
HOWEVER—



THIS, TOO,  
IS HIS HAND-  
WORK. WHY  
DOES HE  
PURSUE  
ME?

SHE FLUNG THE FAN ON THE FLOOR.



HA! HA! IT  
WAS NOT KING  
KUSHA WHO MADE  
THAT FAN. SO WHY  
DO YOU DISOWN  
IT, PRABHAVATI?

DON'T YOU  
DARE SHOW  
ME SUCH  
INFERIOR  
WORK EVER  
AGAIN.

THE WICKER-WORKER RETURNED, AND TOLD  
KUSHA ALL THAT HAPPENED AT THE PALACE.

...WOMEN ARE STRANGE.  
I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE  
THREW IT ON THE  
FLOOR IN A RAGE.



KUSHA KNEW.

I WILL HAVE TO TRY  
SOME OTHER MEANS  
TO MEET HER.





HE PONDERED FOR A WHILE, THEN—

I KNOW WHAT. I SHALL SEEK SERVICE IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN, PERHAPS...



KUSHA WAS LUCKY. THE ROYAL COOK HAD SACKED ONE OF HIS ASSISTANTS THAT VERY DAY.

AND DON'T EVER LET ME SEE YOU NEAR THE ROYAL KITCHEN AGAIN.



SO THE MOMENT KUSHA APPROACHED THE ROYAL COOK —

IN FACT, I NEED A HELP, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO COOK YOUR OWN MEAL IN THE KITCHEN MEANT FOR MENIALS.

THAT IS NO PROBLEM, SIR.



KUSHA SOON BECAME AN EXPERT COOK— BETTER EVEN THAN HIS MASTER. ONE DAY—

HERE, YOU MAY COOK THIS CHOP FOR YOURSELF.



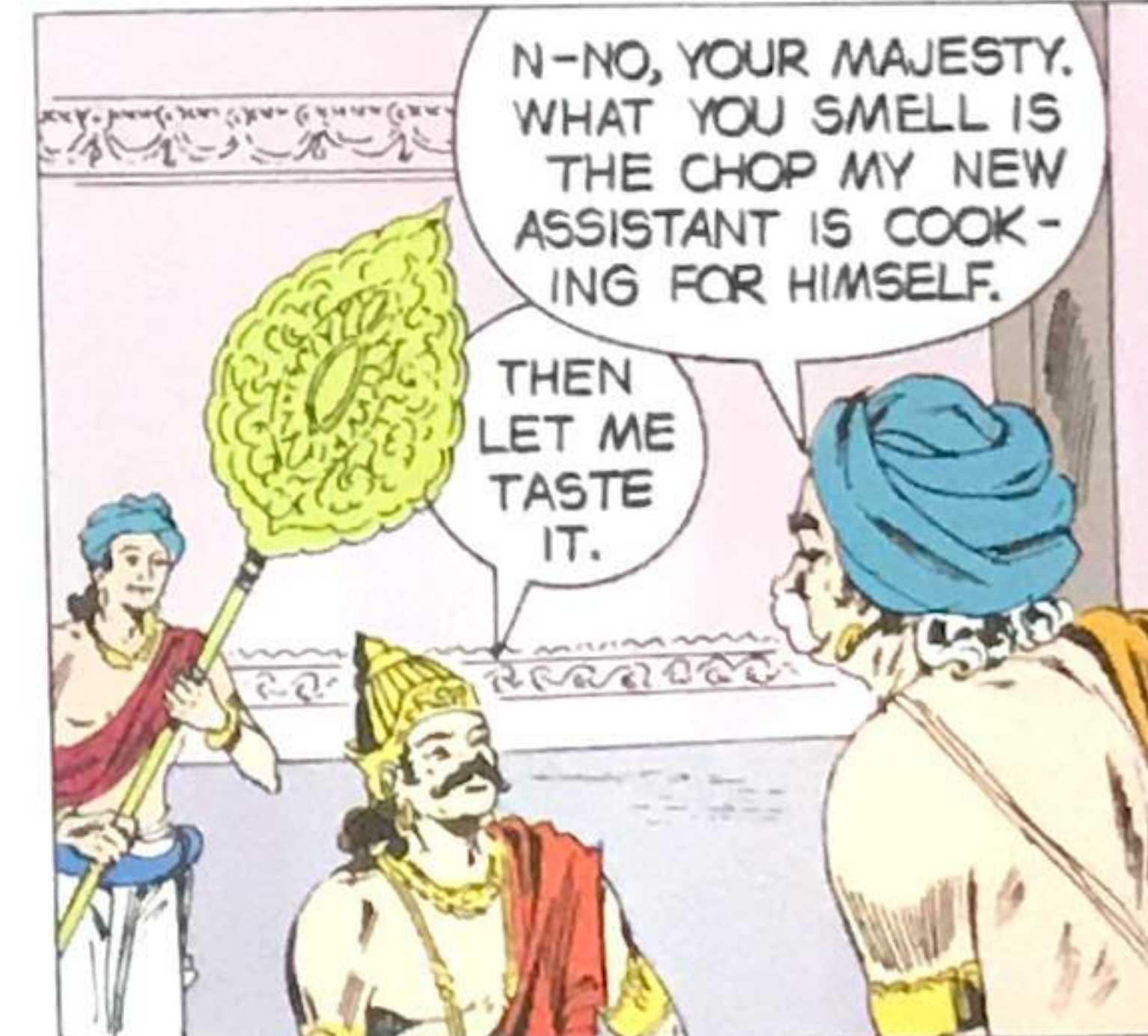
AN HOUR LATER, AS THE KING WAS BEING SERVED—

MM—M—M! WHAT A DELICIOUS AROMA. IS THAT DISH YET TO COME?



N—NO, YOUR MAJESTY. WHAT YOU SMELL IS THE CHOP MY NEW ASSISTANT IS COOKING FOR HIMSELF.

THEN LET ME TASTE IT.



AFTER THE KING HAD TASTED IT—

HENCEFORTH YOUR ASSISTANT SHALL COOK FOR ME AND MY DAUGHTERS AH! AND GIVE HIM THESE GOLD COINS.



KUSHA WAS EXTREMELY HAPPY WHEN HE HEARD ABOUT THE KING'S ORDER.

PLEASE KEEP THE COINS FOR YOURSELF, MASTER. I HAVE NO USE FOR THEM.

AT LAST I SHALL BE ABLE TO SEE MY WIFE.





THE NEXT DAY—



I FEEL SORRY FOR HIM, YET I MUST NOT LET HIM KNOW THAT I DO OR HE WILL STAY ON, THINKING I'VE YIELDED.



KUSHA, I CAN'T BEAR THE SIGHT OF YOUR UGLY FACE. GO BACK TO KUSHAVATI. IT IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU TO WASTE YOUR TIME HERE.

I AM NOT GOING BACK WITHOUT YOU. I WANT YOUR LOVE AND NOT THE THRONE. I WOULD GLADLY GIVE UP CROWN AND THRONE TO LIVE NEAR YOU.



WHEN PRABHAVATI HEARD THIS SHE WAS ALARMED.

SUPPOSE HE DECLARES "I AM KING KUSHA" AND SEIZES MY HAND. NO ONE WILL STOP HIM. BESIDES, SOMEONE MIGHT OVERHEAR OUR TALK.

TO DISCOURAGE ANY FURTHER DIALOGUE, SHE CLOSED THE DOOR AND BOLTED IT.



KUSHA GAZED FOR A MOMENT AT THE CLOSED DOOR, AND THEN WENT DOWN.



SHE IS BOUND TO RELENT. I WILL WAIT PATIENTLY.

BUT SEVEN LONG MONTHS PASSED AND KUSHA TOILED ON. AT LAST—

IN SEVEN MONTHS, SHE HAS NOT SO MUCH AS LET ME HAVE A GLIMPSE OF HER. WHY DO I PINE FOR HER? SHE IS HARSH AND CRUEL. I WILL RETURN TO MY KINGDOM AND MY PARENTS.

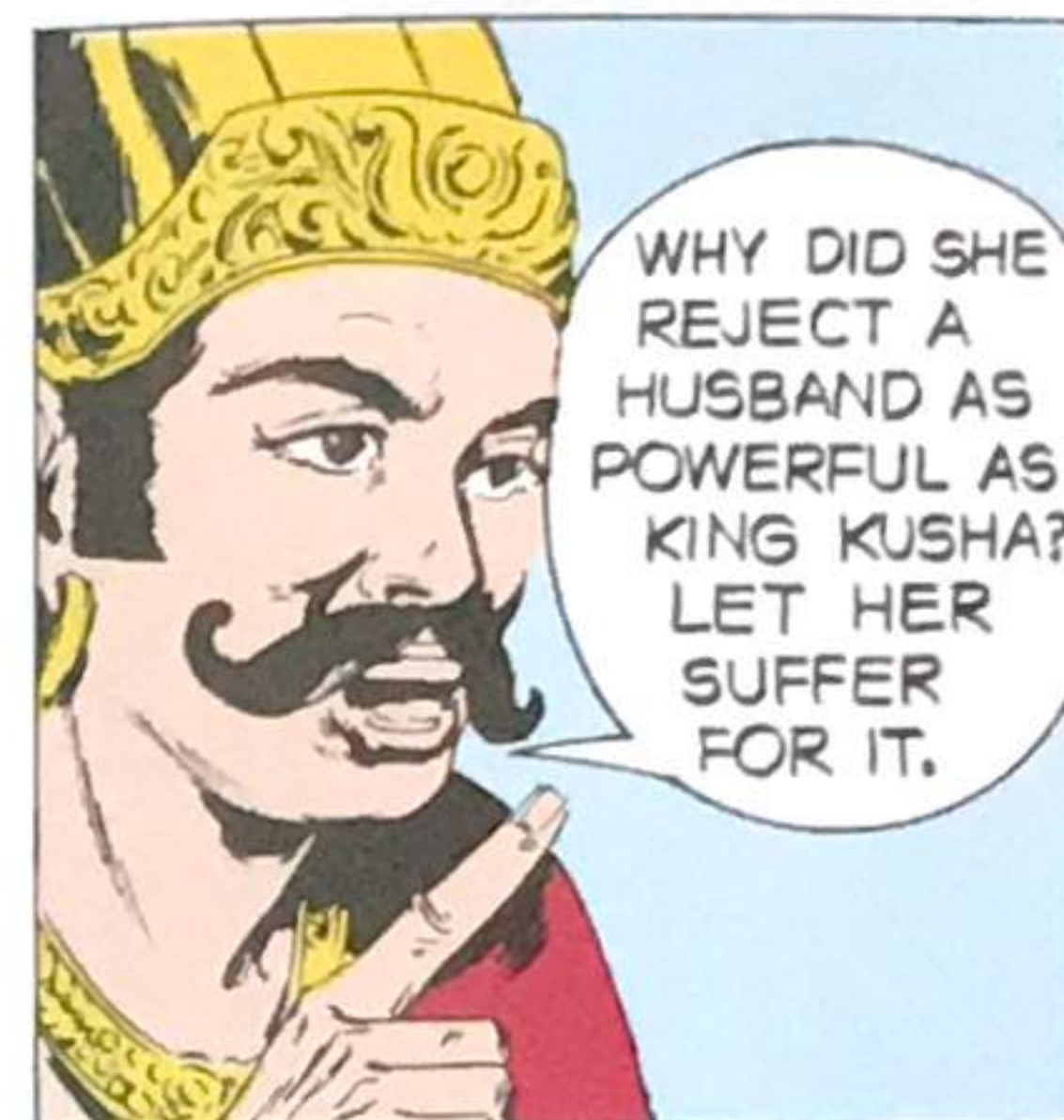
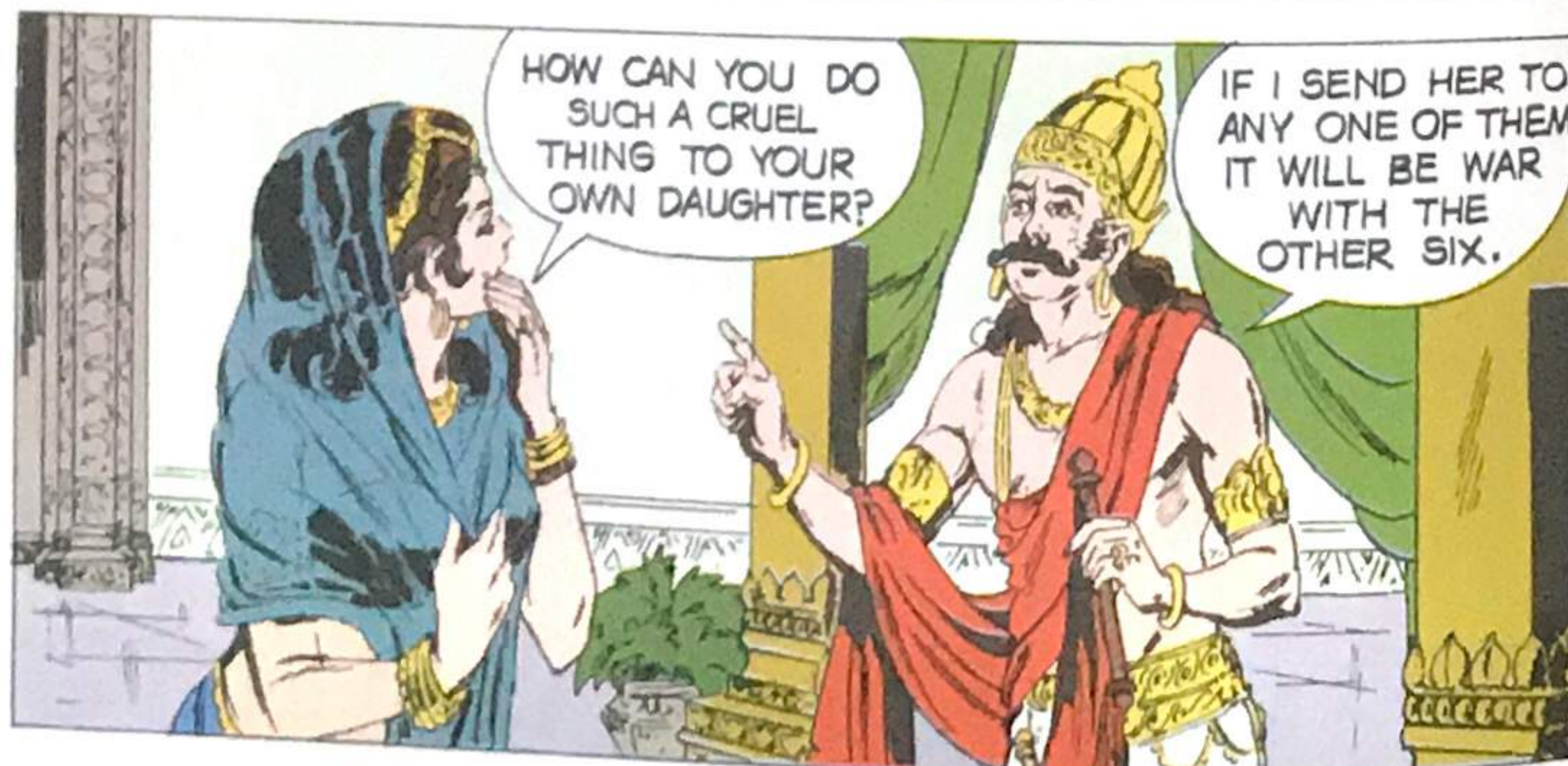
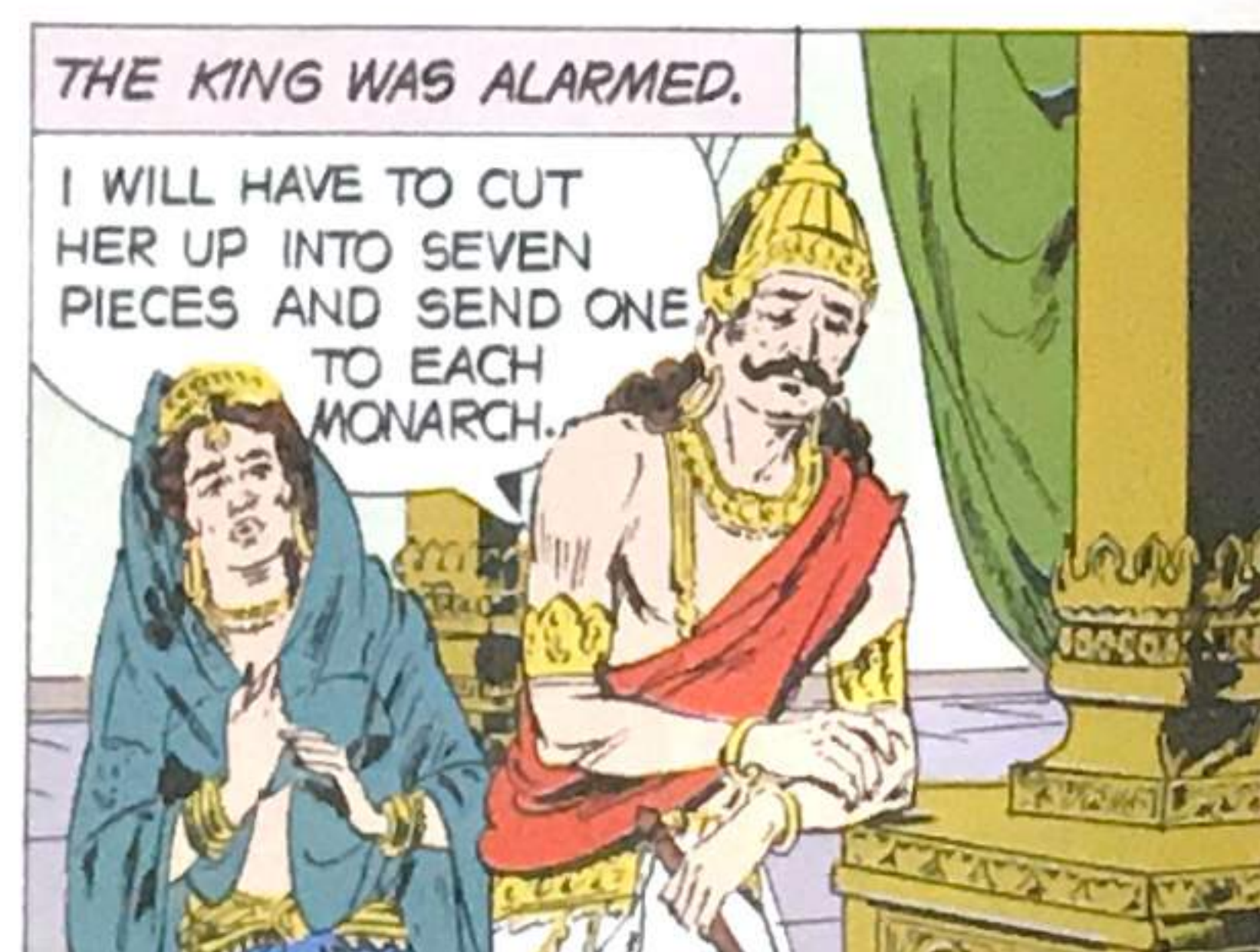


AT THAT MOMENT, REALISING HOW DISAPPOINTED KUSHA WAS, INDRA DECIDED TO HELP HIM.



I WILL SEND THE SAME MESSAGE TO SEVEN DIFFERENT KINGS, SAYING PRABHAVATI HAS LEFT KING KUSHA AND RETURNED HOME. I OFFER HER HAND TO YOU.







SHE RAN FORWARD AND FELL AT KUSHA'S FEET.



KUSHA SETTLED MATTERS BY OFFERING HIS SEVEN SISTERS-IN-LAW TO THE SEVEN KINGS.

